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OPERATION ANVIL/DRAGON

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. <b>AD-A151685</b>	3. RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle) <b>OPERATION ANVIL/DRAGON The Invasion of Southern France 15 August-1 September 1944 Offensive, Deliberate Assault, Amphibious</b>		5. TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED <b>Student Paper</b>
7. AUTHOR(s) <b>MAJs Stewart, Anton, Costello, LTC Domi, MAJs Pingel, Gaylord, Myers, McFetridge, Pankey, Pekney, Edie, Smerz, Townsend</b>		6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS <b>Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC ATZL-SWI, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900</b>		8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS <b>Combat Studies Institute, USACGSC ATZL-SWI, Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900</b>		10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS (if different from Controlling Office)		12. REPORT DATE <b>May 1984</b>
		13. NUMBER OF PAGES
		15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report)
		15a. DECLASSIFICATION DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE
16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)  <b>APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE: Distribution Unlimited.</b>		
17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)		
18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES <b>A battlebook prepared by students of the US Army Command and General Staff College under the supervision of Combat Studies Institute as part of the Battle Analysis program.</b>		
19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) <b>History, Case Studies, Military Operations, Tactical Analysis, Battles, Tactical Warfare, Antitank Warfare, Armor, Artillery, Infantry, Engineer, Ranger Operations, Terrain Analysis, Naval Operation, Tactical Air, Amphibious Operations, Decep- tion. FREE TERMS: Southern France, Lyons, Airborne Operations, First Special Service Force.</b>		
20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number) <b>The 3rd Infantry Division reinforced with numerous armor, chemical, medical, and ordnance units, was to land in the vicinity of St. Tropez and Cavalaire, South- ern France; clear the enemy from the high ground, move rapidly inland and pre- pare to assist Seventh Army's attack against the ports of Toulon and Marseille. Even though the Normandy landings had been conducted two months previously, and the Naval buildup in the Naples area, the Germans were taken completely by sur- prise. This was the first daylight landing, and by noon, almost all the divi- sion's rapid advance through Southern France, makes this a classic in the history of amphibious operations.</b>		

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OPERATION ANVIL/DRAGON  
THE INVASION OF SOUTHERN FRANCE  
BY  
THE 3D INFANTRY DIVISION AND OTHER  
SEVENTH ARMY UNITS  
August 15 - 1 September 1944

Prepared by Staff Group 3D

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Submitted to the Combat Studies Institute  
U.S. Army Command and General Staff College  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for  
Subcourse F651, Battle Analysis

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

May 1984



## ABSTRACT

COMMON REFERENCE: Operation Anvil/Dragoon

TYPE OPERATION: Amphibious assault and pursuit

OPPOSING FORCES: US/Allies: 7th US Army  
French Army B

Enemy: 19th Germany Army

SYNOPSIS: On 15 August 1944 the 3d Infantry Division and other 7th Army Units invaded Southern France. By 1 September these forces had routed the German 19th Army and were approaching contact with the 3d U.S. Army at the Franco-German Border near Lyons.

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## INTRODUCTION

On August 15, 1944, the U.S. Seventh Army, led by the U.S. VI Corps, invaded Southern France. By the first of September, the allied force of three U.S. Infantry Divisions (3d, 36th, 45th) and seven French infantry and armored divisions had destroyed the German Nineteenth Army, captured the key port of Marseilles, and was moving quickly to link up with the U.S. Third Army on the Franco-German frontier. The following analysis will explore why the invasion was conducted, the planning and training which prepared the force, and the 3d Infantry Division's tactical operations from the initial landings to the fighting around the southern French town of Montelimar.

This analysis focuses on the 3d Infantry Division. By the time of the Anvil operation, the 3d had previously landed in North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio. Its leadership was battle tested and extraordinarily competent. The division more than measured up to the challenge in southern France, moving further and taking fewer casualties than in any of its other campaigns in World War II.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this campaign, codenamed ANVIL (later changed to DRAGOON), was the conservatism of the plan. General Patch, the Seventh Army

Commander, directed that seizing the lodgement area was the most important task for the allied force. This is surprising in that soon after the OVERLORD landing in Normandy, the German forces in southern France were again reduced, this time to virtual impotence. This state of affairs was known to the allies and published in intelligence summaries. However, the plan continued to concentrate on the landing, providing no set plan or force intent on destroying the German Army in southern France. Only while the allied landing force was enroute to the battle did the leaders seem to take the time to gage the enemy and improvise an operation to destroy him.

#### SOURCES

There is an abundance of source material available on ANVIL/DRAGOON in the archives section of the Combined Arms Research Library. The level of material ranges from a concept plan prepared at Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters to the notes of the 3d Infantry Division G-3. Copies of operation plans are available from army to regimental level. There are also extensive collections of staff summaries, often 'dailies' from each level covering the whole operation.

Even items such as terrain perspective sketches of the landing areas are available.

Another interesting set of documents is composed of the numerous post war summaries written by many of the German Commanders and key staff officers while they were detained in prisoner of war camps. This material was especially useful in painting the picture of the German situation later in this analysis. A note here--the imperiousness of some of the officers comes through often. Things would have been different, they say, if we (the U.S.) had been fighting the *real* German Army.

Of special note are two studies done by Command Classes One and Two, USACGSC, during 1946. The officers preparing these were in many cases veterans of the operation itself, including Colonel (later General) A.O. Connor, the 3d Infantry Division G3 during ANVIL/DRAGOON. They provide interpretations of the events, developed a short time after the war. They also give insight as to why some things were done which go unexplained in the other, more basic documents such as the operation plans and orders.

The bibliography covers only those documents used in performing the battle analysis. The reader should understand

that this bibliography covers only forty percent of the materials available in the Combined Arms Research Library on ANVIL/DRAGOON.

## STRATEGIC SETTING

I honestly believe that God will be with us as he was in "OVERLORD" and in Italy and in North Africa. I always think of my early Geometry: 'A straight line is the shortest distance between two points.'

President Roosevelt's message to  
Prime Minister Winston Churchill,  
2 July, 1944. (1)

## THE ACTORS

The preceding quote highlights the debate surrounding one of the most controversial decisions of World War II. It was a debate which illustrated the sharp divergence of opinion between American and British civilian and military leadership on the approach to wartime strategy. Moreover, the debate was exacerbated by parochial political concerns and Soviet Union and French involvement. It has been postulated that the current rift between the Soviet Union and the West has its roots in the Anglo-American war council debates of 1943 and 1944. Maurice Matloff noted, "A growing chorus of opinion on both sides of the Atlantic has charged that the peace was lost as a result of political and strategic mistakes of World War II." (2) The highly controversial decision resulting from this debate - to invade Southern France (OPERATION DRAGOON/ANVIL) - has drawn more fire from participants and "observers" than perhaps any other decision during the war. The decision--to invade Southern France (Operation ANVIL).

The three principal actors: the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, took positions in the debate in keeping with their war strategy based on their "view of the world." Therefore, it is important to understand their divergent approaches to global political and military strategy to fully appreciate the multifarious and multidimensional nature of the debate.

Great Britain is an island nation historically tied to her colonies and dependent upon sea lanes and trade with other nations for its survival. Accordingly, Great Britain relied heavily on the continental and global balance of power. She has always been quick to rally to the aid of smaller European nations threatened by any large power which sought to upset the delicate balance of power. Further, she could be expected to intervene actively in the Mediterranean and Middle East to protect her lifeline to Oriental empires. Great Britain was well experienced in war and diplomacy and had long and extensive alliances with other European nations. Militarily, the British "treasure" was her Navy. Her ground forces were fully committed which weakened her bargaining power considerably in the debate.

It must also be remembered that Great Britain had been suffering from extensive combat and air attacks on her homeland. She was reluctant to "risk all" in a direct fight with Nazi Germany. Accordingly, with Churchill at the helm, Great Britain was inclined to follow a peripheral strategy of "attritional opportunism." Simply put, she sought to fight those battles which held a high probability of success and

wear down the Nazi war machine prior to attacking the Germans head on. Another major concern of Great Britain was the increasing strength of the Soviet Union and its rapid advance into Poland and the Balkans. Great Britain saw the war becoming an ever-increasing contest for large political states--who would occupy what territory when the the war ended and, thus, exercise postwar control over the areas. Great Britain became as much concerned, if not more so, with the long term political consequences of coalition war strategy as she was with near-term military conflict.

The United States, on-the-other-hand, was "young, impatient, rich in resources, highly industrialized, the country with the technical know-how. This was the country whose tradition in war had been first to declare, then to prepare." The United States was geographically removed from the war and, therefore, viewed the war differently. Their idea was to "hold off as long as possible, enter only long enough to give the bully who started it a sound thrashing, get the boys home, and then try to remain as uninvolved as before." (3) They were, however, closely tied to Europe. But their attention was also divided--it was Japan who attacked Pearl Harbor.

While the United States had agreed early on with Great Britain on a "beat Germany first" war strategy, they knew they had another Axis power to defeat after Germany. The United States, with their vast industrial, mass-production resources, believed strongly in mass and concentration of forces to meet Nazi Germany head-on and defeat them.



America's primary concern with the British attrition and peripheral approach to warfare was the potential cost in terms of men, money, and time. Moreover, the military was becoming increasingly concerned about the ultimate limits of manpower mobilization and the need to get on with their war with Japan. These concerns offered credibility to the American strategy of mass, concentration, and overwhelming power in a major head-on engagement. Also, President Roosevelt's sensitivity to public opinion outweighed his concern about unilateral efforts by the Soviet Union to dominate vast areas of postwar Europe. Political considerations compelled Roosevelt to wage a fierce war and bring it to a rapid, decisive conclusion. To become entangled in European power politics and fight a prolonged war of attrition would have been unacceptable to the American public.

The third member of the triumvirate was the Soviet Union who held the "swing vote" in determining the Alliance war strategy. Primarily a land-locked power with completely internal lines of communications, the Soviet Union represented "an enigmatic, restless, and dynamic force, devoted to a political and economic ideology different from that of the Western partners." (4) In retrospect, it can be seen that World War II represented merely a pause in the Soviet Union's dual drive toward security and expansion. Yet, by late 1943, the Soviet Union had suffered from Germany's attacks and was locked in a desperate fight for its existence.

Stalin agreed with the concentration-of-power strategy espoused by Roosevelt, believing it would open up a huge pincer movement to break the back of Nazi Germany. This effort would also relieve the pressure on the Eastern front. As British power and influence on war strategy waned, the Soviet Union's power dramatically increased. The degree to which Soviet war strategy was influenced by long term political power considerations is left to conjecture. When the Soviet Union cast its decisive vote with the United States, it marked the beginning of a wartime realignment in the European power balance.

#### STRATEGIC BACKGROUND

Operation ANVIL was changed to Operation DRAGOON because it was believed that the original name had been compromised. For clarity, the operation will be termed ANVIL throughout this section. Operation ANVIL was always inextricably linked as a secondary or diversionary attack for the Normandy invasion--Operation OVERLORD.

By August 1943, the war was progressing favorably for the Allies who had assumed the offensive in every area.

"Sicily had been invaded and success assured.

The Soviets had blunted the long-awaited German operation at Kursk and had started their own offensive in central and southern Russia. The long American trek across the Pacific toward Japan was also underway. In the air, the Combined Bomber offensive was starting to show results. Even more

importantly, the battle of the Atlantic had been won, thus assuring the invasion of western Europe would eventually become a reality." (5)

At the same time, Mussolini resigned and Italy began negotiating for a secret peace. Eisenhower, in the summer of 1943, analyzed two courses of action which supported a landing in France and advance across the plains of Western Europe into the heartland of Germany. One course was through southern France, where maneuver would be restricted by the Rhone Valley. The second course was through Eastern Greece to join forces with the Soviets. The second course suffered the major disadvantage of allowing the Germans to fight the Allies on a single front.

This led to the August, 1944 meeting between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill in Quebec--code named QUADRANT--where it was agreed a diversionary attack for OVERLORD would take place in southern France. The operation, as proposed by the Americans, was to be an offensive operation of Allied forces, including trained and re-equipped French forces. They were to establish a lodgement in the Toulon-Marseilles area and exploit northward to create a diversion in connection with OVERLORD. Operation ANVIL was born. Its development to maturity, however, would be marked by a long and precarious trek through a political minefield.

On the Axis side, German and Italian forces moved to occupy southern France as early as November, 1942. German officials were skeptical of the newly installed Vichy

government's capability to administer southeastern France. Hitler used the Allied invasion of North Africa as the opportunity to move forces into southeastern France to "prevent enemy agitation and putsch attempts in the unoccupied zone." The *Fuehrer's* order further stated that "an occupation of the entire unoccupied area....might be undertaken according to the situation." (6) On 11 November, the German First Army and Army Task Force Felber pushed across the demarcation line in the north. Almost simultaneously, the Italian Fourth Army advanced west across the French Riviera and into the interior of France.

Within two days, while suffering no significant casualties, German forces occupied all of southeastern France west of the Rhone and Italian forces occupied the area east of the Rhone. Axis forces then disarmed the French military units and began improving the coastal defenses of the Mediterranean. The next major German concern was Italy. Over 400 miles of coastline had to be defended against attack. By May-June 1943, Germany had become increasingly concerned with the deteriorating Italian forces. After the overthrow of Mussolini and the Allied invasion of Sicily, the Germans began to occupy Italian positions. By the end of September, the Germans found themselves stretched to the limit trying to defend their original area, plus the area previously under Italian control in southern France. German forces in France could not expect help from outside their area, and they faced the likelihood of having to give up their best forces to other theaters.

## EVOLUTION OF ANVIL

As previously noted, Operation ANVIL's maturation was fraught with many pitfalls. Essentially, it can be characterized as an "on again-off again" operation. Although the concept of a diversionary attack in southern France was codified by the American and British leadership at QUADRANT, the issue was again heavily debated by the "Big Three" at the Cairo-Tehran Conference in November-December 1943. A brief synopsis of the debate will enable the reader to more fully appreciate the ensuing battle.

The Tehran Conference is considered the decisive conference in World War II strategy since it was the first time Roosevelt and Churchill met with Marshall Stalin. Both the American and British leaders clearly realized it would be the Soviets who would break the deadlock over war strategy. The Americans still pursued a strategy of concentration. Churchill advocated the "peripheral" attrition strategy and was cooling toward OVERLORD and associated invasions. Stalin, anxious to get OVERLORD underway to relieve pressure on the eastern front, sided with the American position and stressed the need for simultaneous operations in northern and southern France. The conference concluded with the understanding that OVERLORD was a "go" and was planned for May. Additionally, ANVIL again was agreed upon with a D-day to coincide with OVERLORD.

A variety of circumstances occurred in early 1944, however, which seriously threatened ANVIL. The shortage of landing craft and troops forced a new look at the viability

of ANVIL. Eisenhower felt that rearmed French forces would in part compensate for the lack of troops. Moreover, in January 1944 the Mediterranean was stripped of all shipping for OVERLORD except the minimum necessary to mount a two-division assault for ANVIL. The slow progress and unfavorable ground situation in Italy, however, also precluded withdrawal of any forces from the Italian theater for use in ANVIL. These two major factors forced the decision to abandon plans for a simultaneous invasion with OVERLORD.

The debate continued over the American position to invade southern France and the British position to make the southern push in Italy. The American concern was summed up by the Chief Army planner, Brigadier General Frank N. Roberts as follows:

"If we cancel ANVIL completely, the following will be true:

- a. We get into political difficulties with the French.
- b. OVERLORD will lose at least ten fighting divisions.
- c. Our service forces continue to support the western Mediterranean.
- d. Our divisions and the French divisions will be committed to a costly, unremunerative, inching advance in Italy. The people of both the United States and France may or may not take this indefinitely.

e. Once committed to Italy, we have our forces pointed towards southeastern Europe and will have the greatest difficulty in preventing their use for occupation forces in Austria, Hungary and southern Germany." (7)

A compromise was proposed by the British and accepted by the Americans. Resources were to be placed in an all-out offensive in Italy which would be given first priority. This allowed both the Italian campaign to be stepped up and execution of the Normandy invasion to proceed. ANVIL continued in the planning process, however, in hopes that it could be launched shortly after OVERLORD.

The Italian and Normandy successes shortly reopened the debate. Again, the British wanted to pursue the Germans up the leg of Italy, through Austria, and into Germany (advocated in June by General Maitland Wilson, Supreme Commander in the Mediterranean Theater). The British saw the objective as capturing Istria, and Trieste, and advancing through the Ljubljana Gap with all the associated political and strategic consequences of keeping the Soviets out of the Balkans (the major concern seemed to be a long range, European-power-balance orientation). American leaders maintained their position to strengthen OVERLORD and to push a continental drive into Germany.

Concurrently, unrest in Germany was increasing because of the Allied successes in Italy and the growing Soviet threat in the East. Moreover, Allied bombings of industrial installations, transport facilities, and oil refineries,

coupled with a sea blockade were weakening Germany's ability to continue the war. The Maquis in southern France were also increasing their activities and were preparing to support an invasion of southern France by Allied forces.

Roosevelt and Churchill exchanged a multitude of correspondence in June, with each trying to persuade the other to change his position. Finally, Roosevelt's adamant position and personal involvement won the day. Roosevelt sent a message on 2 July asking Churchill to direct General Wilson to "set the wheels in motion for an early ANVIL." (8) Churchill relented and agreed to the issuance of the directive on 2 July stating "ANVIL would be launched with a target date of 15 August on a three division assault basis and an airborne lift to be decided later. The build-up would be to ten divisions." (9)

The stage was set. Last minute maneuvering by the British to cancel the operation met with no success. Eisenhower's position "that sound strategy called for making the Germans fight on as many fronts as possible..." (10) was followed, in spite of continued objections by Churchill. Three days after the beginning of ANVIL, Churchill sent Eisenhower "a glowing message after watching the landing in southern France on 15 August." (11)



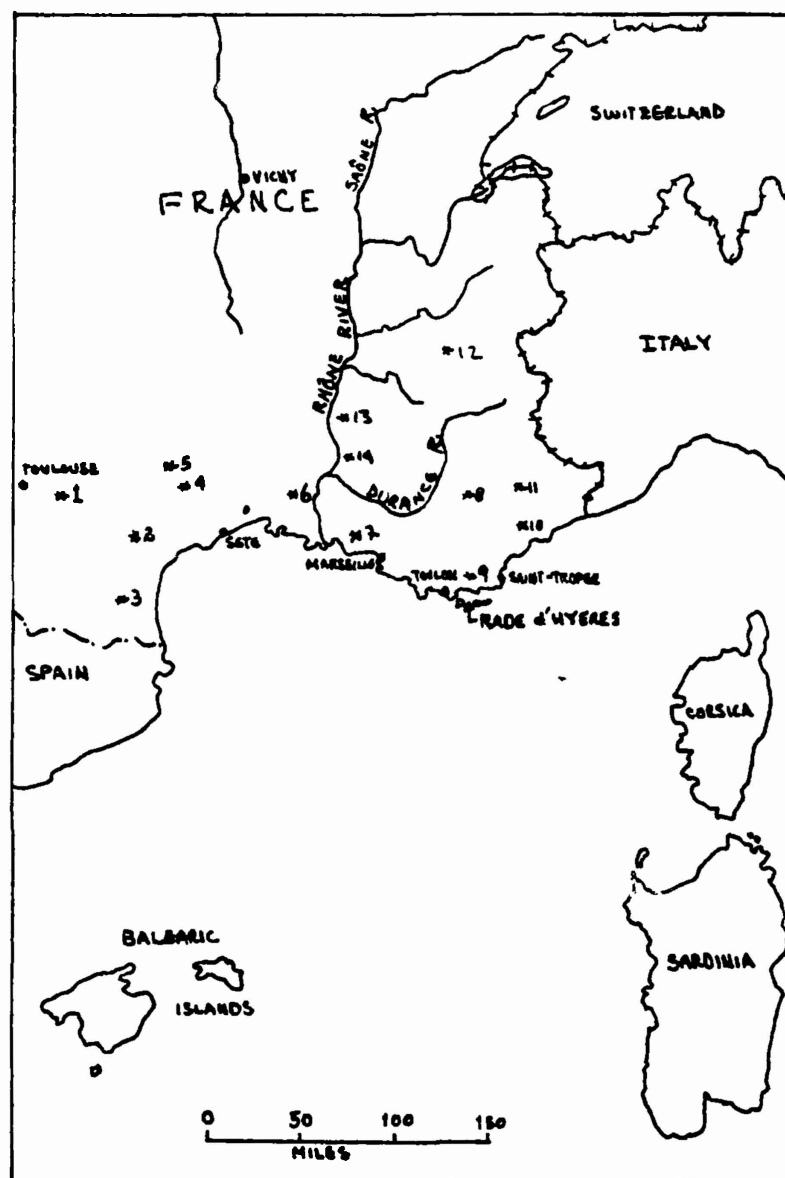
## THE TACTICAL ACTION

### THE AREA OF OPERATIONS

Once the decision was made to begin planning an invasion of southern France, the realities of the ground largely dictated the choice of the location. A primary goal was to secure the use of a major port to speed the build-up on the continent. If land-based air support was to be provided, the landing site would have to be within range of airfields in Corsica. Finally, if an early link-up with the OVERLORD force was to be achieved, the routes of advance into central France and western Germany were limited to a few choices, which were obvious to both the Allies and the Germans.

### THE CHOICE OF LANDING AREAS

The need for a major port was driven by two considerations. Strategically, a major port in southern France would clearly be needed to support the cross-channel forces in their advance into Germany. Operationally, the scale of the planned ANVIL operation necessitated "the development of a base at an existing, and adequate port in southern France." (12) Although the Mediterranean coast of France was dotted with many ports, only three were large enough to be considered capable of supporting ANVIL: Sete, Marseilles, and Toulon. (See Map A) Of these, Sete was eliminated from further consideration because of its limited capacity, easily-blocked approaches, and difficult exits. Toulon, although capable of supporting the force in its initial stages, suffered from bad clearance facilities.



GERMAN POSITIONS -- SOUTHERN FRANCE

- |                       |                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. 11th PANZER DIV    | 8. LXXXV CORPS        |
| 2. 198th DIV          | 9. 242nd DIV          |
| 3. 716th DIV          | 10. 148th DIV         |
| 4. 189th DIV          | 11. LXII CORPS        |
| 5. IV LUFTWAFFE CORPS | 12. 157th DIV         |
| 6. 338th DIV          | 13. ARMY TASK FORCE G |
| 7. 244th DIV          | 14. 19th ARMY         |

MAP A: SOUTHERN FRANCE (Ports and German Dispositions)

Marseilles, with its extensive facilities, road, and railroad net, would be ideal and the planners concluded that, "...while the use of Toulon and the beaches must permit maintenance of sufficient forces for the holding of the bridgehead and for the advance on Marseilles, the use of the latter port will be essential as a main base port for the exploitation northwards." (13) [emphasis original]

Having determined that Marseilles was a prerequisite for further advance, the planners turned their attention to a choice of landing areas. A study of France's Mediterranean coastline, predominantly rocky, and with limited beach facilities, revealed that "the only beaches suitable for a large force are west of Sete or east of Toulon." (14) Fighter protection could be provided by land based fighters operating from Corsica to cover landings anywhere east of Marseilles. Even at that, however, the planners felt that carrier based fighter cover might be required to supplement land based fighters. (15) Sete dropped from consideration, and planning focused on the area east of Toulon as the landing site.

In this area, further study revealed that there were only three areas of beach which merited further consideration as a possible site for a large-scale landing: Rade d'Hyeres, Cavalaire, and Cannes. Cannes offered the advantage of having an airfield nearby, a desirable characteristic in terms of enhancing air support. However, it was the farthest of the three sites from a suitable port, possessed a high seawall, and was backed by high ground which offered poor

communication inland and westward. (16)

The Cavalaire area offered no airfield, and was located some 30 miles farther east of Toulon than the third candidate, the Rade d'Hyeres. The depth of the water in the area limited anchorage space. These disadvantages notwithstanding, Cavalaire was a suitable area and remained in contention as a landing site. (17)

The Rade d'Hyeres offered both the greatest number of advantages and disadvantages. It was within 20 miles of Toulon, had an airfield close at hand, and was protected by offshore islands that held the promise of good anchorages and defensibility from U-boat attack. The beaches themselves were adequate for a large force, some were of good gradient, and the exits were, on the whole, good. On the negative side, "[this site had] the serious disadvantage that an assault in the area [was] unlikely to achieve tactical surprise owing to the islands flanking the approach. Furthermore, the approaches to the Rade were easily mined and strongly defended with coast artillery, and the western beaches of this area [were] backed by an anti-tank ditch." (18)

The planners concluded that the Rade d'Hyeres should be the first choice as a landing site. Cavalaire was selected as an alternate, should the defenses at the Rade prove too strong. This proved, in fact, to be the case, and Cavalaire was ultimately selected as the landing site.

#### TERRAIN

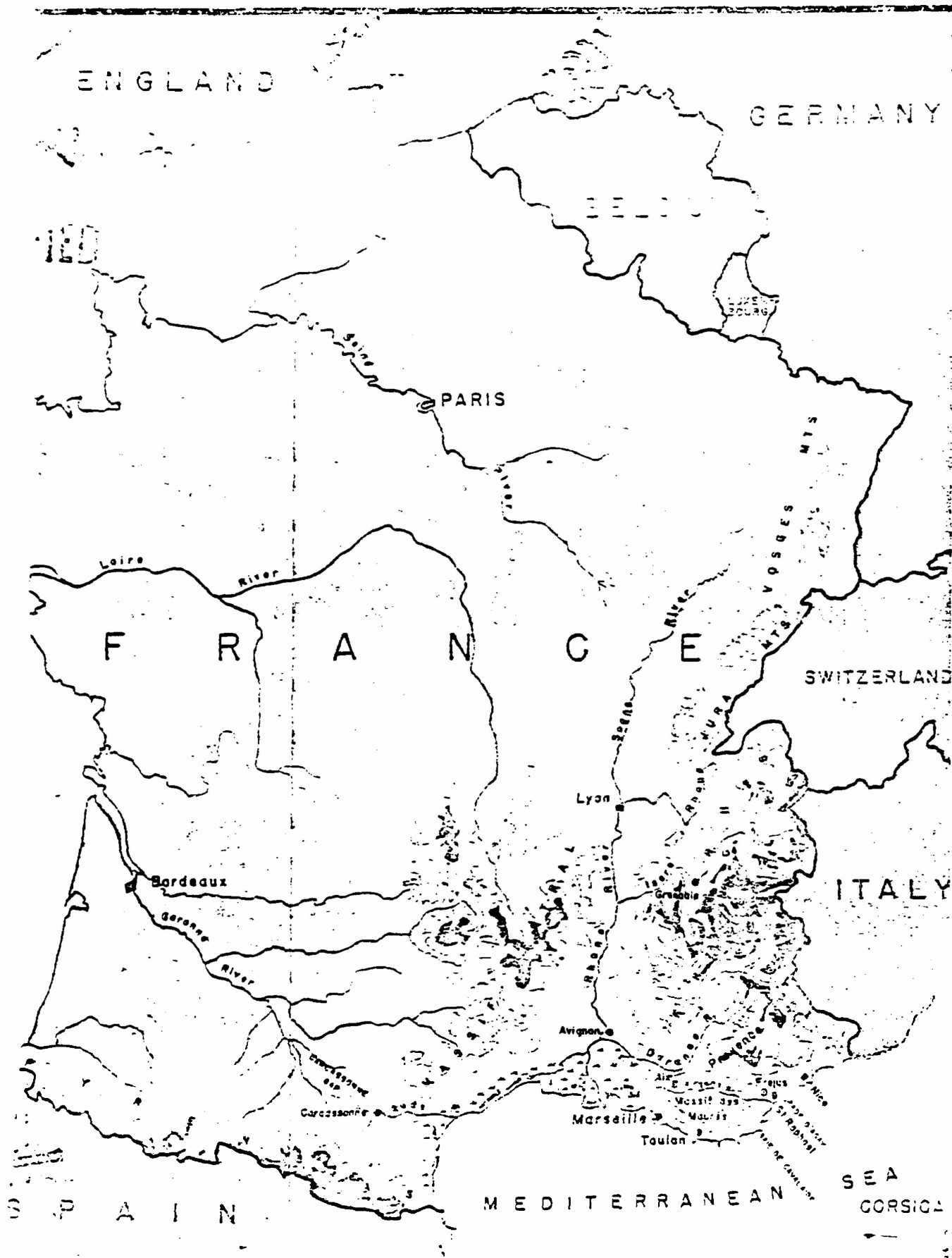
The southern portion of France is dominated by three

major terrain systems: the Massif Central, the Alps, and the Mediterranean lowland. (See Map B)

The Massif Central is a broad area of difficult country, composed of rolling uplands of crystalline rock in the north, numerous volcanic cones and lava flows in the center, and limestone plateaux in the south. The drainage system is mixed, depending on the nature of the soil, and the vegetation varies from thick forested zones to small agricultural patches. Entry into the province from the east and southeast is extremely difficult because it presents an abrupt wooded escarpment towards the Rhone Valley. Once in the Massif, cross-country movement is possible in the plateau areas, and severely restricted in the other portions.

The western edge of the Alps begins at the east side of the Rhone Valley, into which the mountain system thrusts low spurs. Nearly all the rivers draining the western slopes of the mountain system drain into the Rhone, with tributaries flowing north and south. These river valleys form the avenues of approach into the Alpine region. The mountains extend southward to the Mediterranean coast, forming rocky headlands, deep harbors, and sheltered coves with long sandy beaches. The mountains generally rise directly behind the beaches, but some small plains occur, and some of the beaches are backed by coastal lagoons.

The Mediterranean lowland extends from the Spanish frontier to the Provençal Alps. That portion of it that was of interest to the ANVIL planners was the eastern portion, where the lowland terminates in the marshy Rhone delta. The



MAP B: Major Terrain Features

ports of Marseilles and Toulon are in the Provencal Alps region. (19)

The Rhone Valley leads north from Marseilles and forms the main operational avenue of approach into western Germany. The Rhone River, one of the swiftest and most turbulent in Europe, runs through this rift valley between the Massif Central and the Alps, and the valley is thus dominated by this high ground throughout that portion of its length of immediate operational interest to the ANVIL planners. Two roads and two railroads paralleled the river, one of each on either side, with the river presenting a significant obstacle to movement back and forth. The valley itself consists of a series of flat or gently undulating plains separated from each other by low ridges cutting diagonally across the valley from northeast to southwest, and forming excellent barriers to cross-country movement. (20)

#### TACTICAL ASPECTS OF THE TERRAIN

The sites selected for the 3rd Division landings were the beaches facing Cavalaire and Pampelone Bays, which were separated by the headland upon which sits St. Tropez. Although this area was suitable, it was not the first choice of the planners. The beaches themselves were flat and sandy, and the offshore gradient was so steep that, in some cases, landing craft were able to run up and drop their ramps onto the beach. The exits from the beaches, however, were limited, and in some cases the approaches to the main road network were limited. (21)

The nature of the terrain insured that the dominant ground behind the beaches worked to the advantage of the defender. Aside from the natural advantages accruing to the defender, particularly against an amphibious assault, the Germans took fairly extensive measures to reinforce these advantages. Although, according to observers from Combined Operations HQ in London:

"The defenses were not up to NORMANDY standards; batteries and strongpoints were mostly constructed of timber and earth, although there were some concrete gun emplacements.

The land area close to the beachhead was very heavily mined, while there were underwater obstacles both in Pampelone Bay and Cavallaire Bay. In both these bays there was an offshore sandbar covering roughly the southern half, while the enemy had placed underwater obstacles in the northern half." (22)

This combination of natural and artificial obstacles did, indeed, prove troublesome. In areas not blocked by the sandbar, the Germans had placed a combination of wooden and concrete barriers of upright posts sunk into the seabed, and concrete tetrahedra. Sea mines were placed between the posts, which were about 15 feet apart, while tellermines were installed inside the tetrahedra, with an exposed pressure



plug facing the seaward side. (23)

Aside from the obstacles, trafficability proved to be a major factor. The tidal range on this portion of the Mediterranean coast was almost negligible, with the result that the sand on the beaches was extremely soft, even floury, both above and below the waterline. The result was that even four-wheel drive vehicles were unable to move across the beach, except on track or beach roadway. The landing plan recognized this fact, and called for quantities of beach roadway to be brought ashore. Unfortunately, resistance was much heavier than had been anticipated, and beach roadway was sacrificed for ammunition. (24)

#### WEATHER

As might be expected, summer is a most favorable time during which to conduct military operations in southern France. July and August are the hottest months in the Mediterranean coastal area, with average temperatures of about 72 degrees Fahrenheit. October is the wettest month, although even by mid-August the peak of the summer dry season has passed. Visibility is generally good, with the possibility of some sea fog during the afternoon in summer. Further inland, the Alpine zone is both cooler and wetter, though still quite pleasant in late August and early September. In the Rhone Valley, a climatic phenomenon of interest is the *Mistral*, a northerly or north-westerly wind, which is known for its strength, cold, and dryness. It can occur in any month of the year, even in summer. (25)

### THE EFFECT OF WEATHER ON THE OPERATION

Weather received little mention in 3rd Division G2 situation reports, suggesting that it was not a significant factor in the operation. The weather for the day of the landing was flat calm, with low visibility. (26) During the remainder of the month of August, the weather was generally good, with rain and thunderstorms on the 21st and 22nd followed by extended periods of unrestricted visibility reported. Winds were generally moderate, at speeds of 12 to 20 MPH, from the northwest during rainy periods and from the east and southeast in periods of fair weather.

Of particular concern to the planners must have been the effects of weather on the road network, since only the principal routes were hard-surfaced, and, of these, only the Route Nationale could reasonably be expected to be in good repair. (27) The moderate weather worked to the attackers advantage, but the impact was not great.

## THE ENEMY SITUATION

The New Year of 1944 was a dismal one for the German Army. The coming year would undoubtedly bring renewed assaults on the long Russian front where the Stalingrad and Kursk battles had caused irreplaceable losses. The growing strength of both the Allied Armies in Italy and the partisan movements in the Balkans clearly indicated increasing danger from these quarters. Both the great hope and the great danger were in the west. The Allied Armies building up in England must land somewhere in northwest Europe. If they succeeded, then collapse would inevitably follow. However, if they could be defeated, then the Germans could strip bare the western front and create forces to stave off the vast Russian armies. A victory in France, however remote the prospects, was the absolute last chance to avoid certain defeat.

It was for these reasons that France, especially northern France, continued to receive reinforcements. Since 1942, France had been a vast depot and training area. New formations were raised there; worn-out, fought-out divisions from the Eastern Front were reconstituted there; small, high-quality units were expanded there and then inevitably moved back to the active theaters. There were always large numbers of units in France, but they had little fighting capacity. In the spring of 1944, the transfers slowed, then stopped. Every spare man and gun were sent to France, to include battalions of "volunteers" from Russia and the occupied

territories of the East. The preparations were rushed and old stocks of French weapons, tanks, naval guns, field fortifications and anti-invasion obstacles were brought to readiness.

Among the units brought to readiness was the German 19th Army. (See Map A) It was responsible for defending the coast of southern France from the Spanish frontier to the Italian border, a front of almost 650 kilometers. The 19th Army had the most quiet of Germany's quiet fronts. It was mostly a conduit for passing rebuilt units to the Italian theater. Its formations had a mixture of elder and junior age classes. Discipline, especially among the German elements, was good. Officers were either young and inexperienced or old veterans no longer fit for service on the Eastern Front because of wounds, illness or other infirmities. The formations had been constantly levied for their best personnel and equipment. (28)

The commanders in southern France, Blaskowitz, of Army Group G, and von Sodenstern, of 19th Army, were no fools. General Blaskowitz had been banished to southern France because of his public disapproval of the SS and its actions in Poland, where he had been the military commander. Distrusted and disliked by Hitler, Blaskowitz was a highly competent officer who lacked political prestige and influence. Unlike Rommel or Model, Blaskowitz could not manipulate the priorities established by personalities in Nazi Germany. (29) LTG von Sodenstern was so outspoken on the dismal prospects of a successful defense that he was relieved

"for reasons of health" at the end of June 1944. (30)

Whatever its weaknesses, the 19th Army was faced with a formidable mission. It was expected:

- a. "To defend the French Mediterranean Coast and a small sector of the Pyrenees front.
- b. To hold the coast as long as possible in the event of an Allied landing and to throw the enemy back into the sea if possible.
- c. To reconnoiter the old French and Italian defense installations and positions in the Alps with a view to exploring their possibilities in the event of battles in upper Italy." (4)

The German commanders considered an invasion of Southern France-Northern Italy a distinct probability, even before the Normandy landings. Such a landing would pin down local German forces and draw off reserves from the main battle area. It would also be able to use the extensive base complexes in North Africa, Italy, Corsica and Sardinia. Finally, it would allow Allied reserves and amphibious forces gathered in the Mediterranean to be quickly infused into the decisive battle area. The Germans estimated there were three potential targets for an Allied landing:

- a. An assault was possible on the west coast of the Gulf of Lyons in the region Narbonne-Beziers-Sete to link-up with an assault on the Bay of Biscay and advance up the Rhone. This was unlikely for a variety of reasons.

- b. Yet another possible point of attack was on the coast of the Italian Riviera centered on Genoa. This would unhinge the German defenses in Italy south of the Po River, and was a variation of the Anzio attack. While worrisome, this was not a direct threat to the 19th Army and could be fairly easily blocked along the coastal plain.
- c. The most likely point was, of course, an assault east of the Rhone, then up the valley to the lower Rhine. This was the classic route into France used by Caesar, Napoleon, and ultimately, the U.S. Seventh Army.

The terrain in Southern France favored a defense in depth. The broad coastline was indefensible, but farther inland the Rhone valley narrowed. 19th Army repeatedly recommended the construction of fortifications in the narrow valleys cut by the Rhone, Iser and Saone rivers. In front of these fortifications, but beyond the range of naval gunfire, the Germans would conduct a mobile battle. (32) Berlin categorically refused such a plan as did Rommel when he came to inspect the defenses. The beaches were to be defended to the last man. Yet building materials were in short supply. Of 800 pillboxes planned, only 300 had been constructed and only 80 were armed over the 650 kilometers of the front. (33) All of these installations were on the coast. When the invasion came, the order to retreat arrived from Berlin less than three days after the first allied soldiers landed.

It was not a lack of fortifications that limited the German defense; it was the lack of troops, especially good ones. After the Normandy invasion, Army Group G and 19th Army were milked again for quality troops. Three infantry divisions and the 9th Panzer Division were transferred along with equipment, mobile artillery, anti-tank and anti-aircraft battalions. The SS Panzer Corps went to the front from the neighboring 1st Army. Finally, only 11th Panzer Division was left in reserve for the Army Group. In exchange for its offerings, 19th Army got more used-up divisions, from Normandy. The 716th Infantry Division, for example, arrived from Normandy, in the words of its commander, "defeated and destroyed". (34) No one had any illusions about the fighting strength of the eastern "Volunteer" battalions or the Italian gun crews on the coast artillery pieces. The main question from the Army commander on down was how to save the Army from "useless extermination." (35)

The impending invasion became steadily more obvious. The withdrawal of seasoned American units from the Italian front was noted. All French units and some Moroccan divisions in North Africa were being readied for shipment. (36) The transfer of Allied close support aircraft to Corsica and Sardinia was also an indicator. (37) Even the German soldiers in the streets could not help but notice the evacuation of civilians from the coastal areas and the rumors of an Allied attack on Napoleon's Day, 15 August 1944. (38) When German air reconnaissance spotted the Allied fleet steaming north from Corsica on the 13th, the 19th Army went

on full alert.

The invasion began approximately when and where expected. The last minute measures taken to improve the defenses over the previous month had insignificant results. (39) Although 19th Army had just finished a map exercise against an invasion at virtually the exact spot of the actual landings, there was little that could be done to shore up the weak defenses. The German command expected an airborne assault after the extensive use of paratroops in Normandy. Luckily, this drop landed on the headquarters of LXII Corps which commanded the defense along that section of the coast. After heavy fighting and ineffective German counter attacks, the headquarters was destroyed. With it went the best chance of conducting a coordinated defense. (40)

The annihilation of 19th Army hung in the balance. As 11th Panzer Division delayed the Franco-American drive up the Rhone, IV Luftwaffe Field Corps retreated up the west bank and frantic efforts were made to hold open the key bottleneck at Montelimar. (41) Even so, the LXXXV Corps was encircled. The Army commander ordered all staff officers to organize combat groups and breakout during the night of 29-30 August 1944 toward Valence. Although under artillery and mortar fire, most of the combat troops escaped. The heavy baggage of the corps, guns, vehicles, and trucks, were abandoned or destroyed. The 19th Army, though bloodied, had escaped a mini-Stalingrad. (42)



## PLANNING AND MOUNTING THE OPERATION

### INITIAL PLANS

The preliminary planning for Operation ANVIL was for an operation to be conducted in conjunction with OVERLORD, which was scheduled for early May, 1944. The plan envisaged a lift for an assault of either two or three divisions with a planned build up to a total of ten divisions. The forces involved were to be American and French, but no definite strengths of units were defined. Initially, the headquarters planning the operation was designated "Force 163."

The preliminary planning was based on several assumptions. These assumptions were: 1) the Italian campaign would be the only offensive operation that the Mediterranean Theater would be involved in; 2) the internal security of North Africa would not limit the number of American and French Divisions available; 3) OVERLORD would take place prior to any other amphibious landing. (43)

The initial planning for Operation ANVIL stressed the need for the planners to remain flexible. A lot of questions remained unanswered such as the assault divisions available, the influence of the Italian campaign and the objectives in Southern France after the landing. Priorities at this time were concerned with Operation OVERLORD. At times it appeared that Operation ANVIL would not go at all. Initial outline plans were developed by

Allied Force Headquarters (AFHQ), however no commitments were made and no orders had been issued. The initial outline plans called for the early capture of a major port. The port of Toulon was considered temporarily adequate, but the port of Marseilles was to be the major base. Initially, the areas of beaches considered most desirable were those of Rade D' Hyeres, with the beaches of Cavalaire (east of Cap Camarat) as the alternative site. However, after General Patch assumed command of the Seventh Army on 18 March 1944, several key changes were made to the AFHQ Outline Plans. The key objective was to make a successful landing and then secure a beachhead that would facilitate further operations as dictated by the mission. The joint planners considered Rade D' Hyeres as undesirable and agreed that an assault in the Cape Cavalaire-Agay area as the most desirable. Among the several reasons for this change were: that the Rade D' Hyeres area was heavily defended, the assault beaches would be within range of coastal guns around Toulon, approaches were heavily mined and this congested area would hinder the maneuverability of our gunfire support ships. The Cape Cavalaire-Agay area, because of the enemy defenses and dispositions, fewer enemy mines and coastal batteries, its good to moderate beaches, and its ability to support our forces, was selected.

During the entire planning process, the enemy situation continued to change; thus, plans were altered as required. The planning process, as far as resources available, was often confused because of changes in target dates, ports to be used,

and units to be available. The Italian Campaign and logistical considerations were the key factors for not arriving at firm plans. AFHQ directed on 28 February 1944 that planning proceed on the assumption that forces available would be three US infantry divisions, five French infantry or mountain divisions, and two French armored divisions; and that the operations would be postponed a month until approximately 1 July 1944. General Eisenhower recommended that ANVIL be launched no later than 30 August with a preferable target date of 15 August. Three assault divisions were nominated by 24 June, with the US VI Corps to be the assault Corps headquarters. The American units were to be the 3rd, 36th, and 45th Infantry units.<sup>(44)</sup>

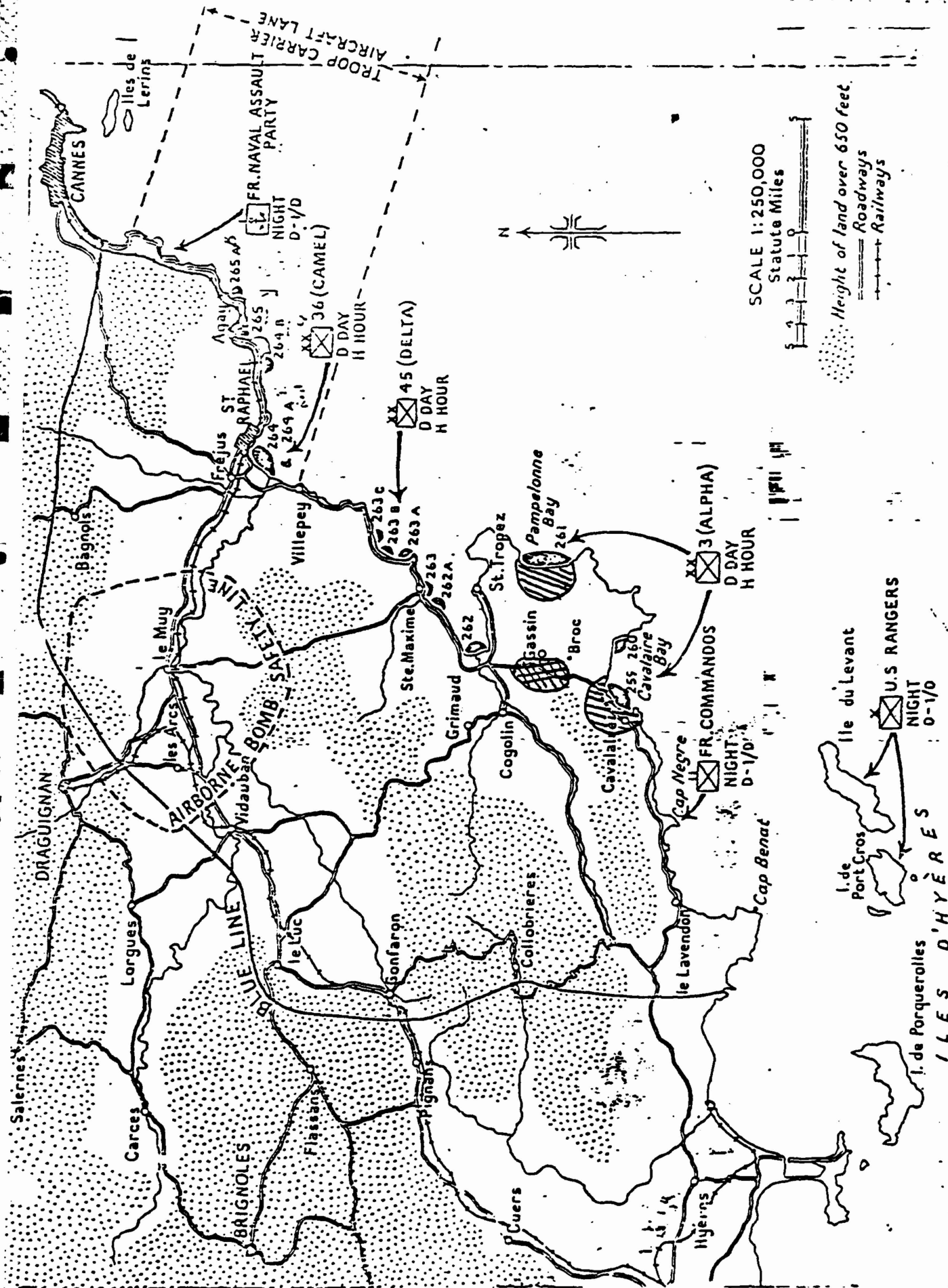
The participation of French forces in Operation ANVIL was an interesting facet. The French believed that they should command the southern invasion. A key element here was national pride and honor for the French Army. However, after meetings between General DeGaulle and General Wilson, a satisfactory agreement was arrived at, and a French Army<sup>(45)</sup> headquarters was worked into the ANVIL operation.

A primary factor in the initial planning was that with lack of definite guidance and decisions the joint planners were about to develop detailed plans covering a variety of assumptions. The planners were extremely flexible, which allowed them to react to many changes.

#### FINAL PLANS/CHOICE OF LANDING AREAS

Because of the detailed planning performed initially, there was little confusion or delay in the final planning once higher headquarters gave the go-ahead for Operation ANVIL. It was during the final planning phase that the operation name was changed to DRAGOON.<sup>(46)</sup>

The final plan called for VI US Corps (KODAK Force), consisting of three US divisions and the French Armored Combat Command Sudre, to assault the beaches at H-hour, on D-day and to capture LeMuy. They would extend the beachhead and secure the airfield sites in the Argens valley against ground observed artillery fire (See Map C). They were then to continue the attack to the north and northwest, after reorganization. The 1st Airborne Task Force (Rugby Force) was to land in LeMuy at about first light on D-day and prevent any enemy movement into the assault area from LeMuy and LeCuc. The 1st Special Service Force (Sitka Force) was to assault the islands of Port Cros and Levant during darkness at H-1 on D-day, with particular emphasis to destroy the enemy coastal battery on the east end of Levant. The French Commando Group (Romeo Force) was to land in darkness on D-1/D-day to destroy coastal defenses in the vicinity of Cape Negre, block the coastal highway, and then seize the high ground in the vicinity of Biscarre. A demolition party from the French Naval Assault Group (Rosie Force) was to land near Pointe Des Travas on the night of D-1/D-day and execute demolitions on the Cannes-St Raphael and Cannes-Frejus roads. The II French Corps (Garbo Force) was to debark after D-day within the established beachhead area, then pass through Kodak Force, capture Toulon,



MAP C: THE INVASION PLAN

and prepare to advance to the north and northwest. The naval plan called for the establishment of the Seventh Army ashore and to support its advance westward. It was to be responsible for the army build-up and maintenance on the beaches until after the capture and utilization of ports. The air plan was broken down into four phases: air offensive operations prior to D-5, the period D-5 to 0350 hours on D-day, the period 0350 hours on D-day to H-hour, and the period after H-hour. (47)

#### LOGISTICS PLANNING

As Erwin Rommel is said to have observed, the battle is fought and decided by quartermasters before the shooting begins. This thought was never closer to being applicable than in the case of Operation ANVIL. The logistics planning was plagued with the uncertainty of the operation, and was characterized by insufficient, changing information on which to base requirements. In order to gain a flavor of the planning of the operation and establish a base line for comparison, we can begin in mid-December 1943, as the Service of Supply, North African Theater of Operations United States Army (SOS, NATOUSA) is informed of a proposed operation. The operational concept was for 450,000 men of three US infantry divisions, five French infantry divisions, and 2 French armored divisions to invade Southern France on 1 Jun 1944.

The planning staffs found themselves facing uncertainty and a lack of time. After receiving information as to the impending

operation, the Commander, SOS, NATOUSA first warned his supporting logistic organization, New York Port of Embarkation (NYPOE) of anticipated requirements on 15 Jan 1944. Three days later, actual requisitions for bulk supplies were submitted. (48) This action was virtually imperative since the conservative estimate of order-arrival time was 98 days. The 1 June target date just allowed sufficient time for the accumulation of necessary stores. Supply requirements were based solely on the initial guidance of force structure and composition. A troop list with any details would not be available for another two months. (49)

Almost from the beginning, shipping plagued the planners. ANVIL as an operation had been relegated a distant backseat to OVERLORD, but of equal priority with the Italian Campaign. On several occasions, the type forces and the date of attack would be changed or cancelled because of a lack of shipping of landing craft. (50) Of continuing concern was the requirement to increase the number of Liberty ships involved because of a lack of assault shipping.

On 14 April, the entire operation was cancelled by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, resulting in the cancellation of all outstanding requisitions with the NYPOE; however, 208,000 long tons had been received of 260,000 requisitioned prior to this. (51) At this time, SOS, NATOUSA, with the concurrence of 7th Army, froze those stocks that had been received for use in "Special Operations." The theater operated as if these supplies did not exist for the

most part. Needless to say, the War Department took exception to this and ordered the release of stocks for normal consumption. This was not complied with in time for it to have any practical adverse effect. Anvil and Task Force 163 remained top priority within the theater. The Combined Chiefs of Staff made the decision to conduct Operation ANVIL on 12 June. Field Marshall Wilson, the Theater Commander, received his instructions on 2 July. (52)

SOS, NATOUSA received the responsibility to support 7th Army when activated. In fulfillment of this mission, all loading instructions for the first six phases of the operation (30 days) were prepared in detail to enable requisitions to be distributed by sub-task force, on the proper ship, for the designated beach. (53) Each increment of supply was five days, based on a shipping turn around cycle of five days.

The maintenance of two large operations in the same theater (Fifth Army in Italy and Seventh Army readying for Southern France) certainly caused conflicts in support. For example, ". . . nearly everything, from communications to service troops had to be shared by the two armies, frequently in a manner unsatisfactory to both." (54) However, the fact remains that only telephone wire was considered critical and not likely to be on hand at the time of the invasion.

As is the case in all plans, the planner must make some assumptions from which to establish a framework for other



actions. ANVIL was no exception. The Ports of Toulon and Marseilles were seen as required before any northward exploitation. This was estimated to happen by D+40 and subsequent progress north would be slow. These assumptions certainly affected both logistic planning for the assault and its execution. (55)

Again, with time growing short, the troop list had grown to 521,858 troops and 100,576 vehicles (See Figure 1). These were scheduled for landing prior to D+60. This resulting 14% increase caused SOS, NATOUSA to effect increased shipments in order to maintain a twenty day reserve and a ten day operating level. (56)

Logistical support for all forces was planned to come over the beaches until D+20. This mission was in the hands of a beach group attached to each assault division. A beach group or Special Engineer Brigade organizationally corrected faulty, unsatisfactory operation of beach unloading encountered during earlier amphibious operations. It was conceived by the Engineer School in the United States and successfully used in the Pacific Theater of Operations. The beach group used for Anvil was a direct descendent of these specialized organizations. (57) Their organization consisted of an Engineer Combat Regiment as a nucleus with necessary service troops and naval personnel attached. This placed responsibility for beach organization, operation, and coordination with a single unit and enabled the rapid receipt and onward movement of men, material, and equipment. (58) In addition to the normally discerned tasks it

FIGURE 1

TROOP LIST--Operation "Anvil" Third Infantry Division (Reinf)

Organization for Combat

1. *Hq & Hq Co, 3d Inf Div*  
 Naval Combat Int Team  
 Air Support Control Party  
 Order of Battle Personnel  
 CIC Personnel  
 Securite' Militaire  
 OSS Personnel  
 Photo Interpreters  
 Civil Affairs Personnel  
 IPW Det
2. *7th Infantry*  
 Co A, 756th Tank Bn  
 Co A, 601st Tank Destroyer Bn  
 Co A, 3d Chemical Bn  
 Co A, 10th Engr Bn (Initially)  
 Co A, 3d Medical Bn  
 10th Field Artillery Bn (Initially)  
 Naval Shore Fire Control Party  
 Det 6617th Mine Clr Co (Gapping Team)  
 Det 3d Sig Co  
 IPW Team
3. *15th Infantry*  
 Co B, 756th Tank Bn  
 Co B, 601st Tank Destroyer Bn  
 Co B, 3d Chemical Bn  
 Co B, 10th Engr Bn (Initially)  
 Co B, 3d Medical Bn  
 39th Field Artillery Bn (Initially)  
 Naval Shore Fire Control Party  
 Det 6617th Mine Clr Co (Gapping Team)  
 Det 3d Sig Co  
 IPW Team
4. *30th Infantry*  
 Co C, 3d Chemical Bn  
 Co C, 3d Medical Bn  
 Det 3d Sig Co  
 IPW Team
5. *3d Division Artillery*  
 9th FA Bn  
 41st FA Bn  
 441st AAA AW Bn  
 634th FA Bn (155mm How)  
 69th Armd FA Bn  
 36st FA Bn (155mm How)  
 Det 2d FA Obsn Bn  
 Naval Gunfire Liaison  
 Naval Shore Fire Control Parties
6. *3d Rcn Troop*
7. *Troop C (Reinf) 117th Cav Rcn*  
*Sq (Mech)*
8. *756th Tank Bn (-Cos A & B)*
9. *601st TK Dest Bn (-Cos A & B)*
10. *3d Chemical Bn (-Cos A, B, & C)*  
 Det 6th Chem Dep Co  
 Det 11th Chem Maint Co
11. *3d Signal Co (-Dets)*  
 Det 163d Sig Photo Co  
 Det D-1 SIAA 3151st Rcn Sq (Mczd)
12. *10th Engr Bn (-Cos A & B)*  
 2nd Bn, 343d Engr GS Regt  
 Det Treadway Bridge Co (378th Engr  
 Bn) (Sep)
13. *703d Ord Co*
14. *Hq & Hq Det 43d Ord Bn*  
 14th Ord (MM) Co  
 3432d Ord (MM) Co  
 64th Ord Ammo Co  
 143d Ord Bomb Disp Sq  
 Det 261st Ord (MM) Co (AA)  
 Det 97th Ord (Hv M) Tk Co

FIGURE 1

TRUPP LIST--Operation "Anvil" Third Infantry Division (Reinf)

Organization for Combat

- |                                    |                            |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 15. 3d Med Bn (-Cos A, B, & C)     | Co A, 759th MP Bn          |
| 10th Fd Hosp (-Hosp Unit)          | 1st Plat 21st Cml Decon Co |
| (-12 Nurses)                       | (Smoke Troops)             |
| 6703d Blood Transfusion Unit       | Det 63d Cml Dep Co         |
| (Fwd Dist Sec)                     | 3d Plat 450th Engr Dep Co  |
| Det 2d Aus Surg Group (-12 nurses) | Hq & Hq Det, 530th QM Bn   |
| 5 Gen Surg Teams (Nos 2, 3, 10,    | 4133d QM Sv Co             |
| 12, 21)                            | 4134th QM Sv Co            |
| 1 Thoracic Team (No. 1)            | 4135th QM Sv Co            |
| 1 Neuro Team (No. 2)               | 4136th QM Sv Co            |
| 1 Orthopedic Team (No. 1)          | 3277th QM Sv Cd            |
| 1 Maxille Facial Team (No. 1)      | 3357th QM Trk Co           |
| 1 Dental Prosthetic Team           | 3634th QM Trk Co           |
|                                    | Det 6690th Regulating Co   |
|                                    | Hq & Hq Det, 52d QM Bn     |
| 16. 95th Evac Hosp (-24 Nurses)    |                            |
| (Mbl)                              |                            |
| 17. 3d QM Co                       | 3333th QM Trk Co (DUKW)    |
| 1st Plat, 46 QM GR Co              | 3334th QM Trk Co (DUKW)    |
| 379th Rpl Co (600 Rpl)             | 3335th QM Trk Co (DUKW)    |
|                                    | 3336th QM Trk Co (DUKW)    |
|                                    | 3353d QM Trk Co (DUKW)     |
|                                    | (Personnel Only)           |
| 18. Beach Group                    | 3355th QM Trk Co (DUKW)    |
| 36th Engr Regt                     | (Personnel Only)           |
| 1st Naval Beach Bn                 | 1 Sec 3856th QM Gas Sup Co |
| 72d Sig Co (Spec)                  | Plat 93d QM Rhd Co         |
| Det 207th Sig Rep Co               | 332d Air Force Sv Gp       |
| Det 177th Sig Rep Co               | (Beach Detail)             |
| Hq & Hq Det 52d Med Bn             | 111th RAF Beach Sec        |
| 376th Med Coll Co                  | (Beach Unit)               |
| 377th Med Coll Co                  | 69th Ord Ammo Co           |
| 378th Med Coll Co                  | 3407th Ord M Auto Maint Co |
| 682d Med Clr Co                    | (DUKW)                     |
| 616th Med Clr Co (-1 Plat)         | Det 77th Ord Dep Co        |
| 1 Sec 377th PW Esct Gd Co          | Det 977th Ord Dep Co       |
| Det Boat Guards                    |                            |
| 157th MP PW Det                    |                            |
| 706th MP PW Det                    |                            |
| 790th MP PW Det                    |                            |
|                                    | 19. Navy Troops            |
|                                    | 16 Combat Demolition Units |

also unloaded ships, operated supply dumps, evacuated casualties, and handled prisoners of war.

A significant asset, frequently overlooked or falsely attributed solely to the quality and competence of senior leaders, that was critical in performing this amphibious landing so successfully was the collective experience of the planners. The VIth Corps staff and US assault divisions gained their experience in North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio. Coincidentally, the 30th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division was the only Army unit to have had any amphibious training prior to 1940. As Corps Commander, Major General Truscott, indicated his G4, Colonel E. J. O'Neill, and other staff members, had a vast experience in over-the-shore maintenance, which was gained in operations from North Africa to Anzio. This level of experience is probably the key ingredient that enabled the successful mounting of such an enormously complex undertaking in such a short period of time.

#### EXTRACTION FROM LINES IN ITALY

The Italian Campaign and other factors which prohibited any final decisions being made on Operation ANVIL, made the identification of available units difficult. Although by 16 June the Army troop list was fairly complete, the order of withdrawal from Italy had not been decided. Time was a key element because previous estimates stated an absolute minimum of 38 days would be

required to take a unit from the front, then train, refit, and load out.

During the initial planning phase, when it was assumed that a two division assault would take place, the two American divisions would be mounted in the Naples area and two follow-up divisions would be mounted from Sicily and North Africa. However, as planning continued, the withdrawal of any US forces in Italy was dependent upon the battle being fought there. Divisions could not be taken from Italy until the capture of Rome at the earliest, and troops could not be diverted from any other theater. When the go-ahead was given for Operation ANVIL by AFHQ, and forces could be withdrawn from Italy, naval ships, craft, and cargo aircraft were not in the theater to effect the removal. These assets had to be rushed back in order to meet the designated target dates. The VI Corps consisting of the 3rd, 36th, and 45th US Infantry Divisions, was mounted from Naples. The Combat Command of the 1st French Armored Division was mounted from Oran. The follow-up force of two Corps of seven French divisions was mounted out of Taranto-Brindisi, Oran, Corsica, and Naples. (59)

#### TRAINING FOR ANVIL

The initial success and rapid advance of the invasion of southern France can be attributed to the training received for the operation. The time available for training was limited because of a number of factors. However, the principal combat

elements of the three American sub-task forces did undergo three weeks of refresher training in amphibious landings. The 36th and 45th US Divisions received their training at the Invasion Training Center in Salerno, Italy. The 3rd Infantry Division was trained by its own Division Commander in Pozzuoli, Italy. A key element during this limited training was that both American and French units had prior combat experience. This was to be very important because of the limited training time available. The service units available had also worked with the divisions nominated for Operation ANVIL. Naval and Air Force units of the Mediterranean Theater had participated in a number of amphibious operations in North Africa, Sicily, Salerno, and Anzio.

Training was designed to be as realistic as possible and it concentrated on preparing the forces for the actual problems of landing. The forces were trained in the use of new equipment and techniques, coordination between different services, and a review of modern warfare. (50)

The Invasion Training Center at Salerno was a key element in the training process. Officers from ANVIL units were trained in waterproofing and they, in turn, conducted schools to train other officer and key NCO's in the 7th Army service units. The center was moved from Fort Aux Poules, Algeria, to Salerno, Italy, during the spring of 1944. The Salerno site proved to be a realistic training base, and it helped develop an appreciation for the necessity for proper preparation. The site was not only valuable because of its proximity to the sea, but its mountains

proved excellent terrain for patrolling, wire and radio, and map and compass training. Sufficient ranges also were available for firing all types of weapons. Terrain models also were used to train soldiers. A key ingredient in the training was that the welfare of the soldiers was taken into consideration. As much rest and recreation as possible was provided during the training, considering the situation.

Infantry training was given in demolitions and amphibious assaults, as well as a review of basic infantry warfare. In addition to specialized training, the infantry schedule included road marches, close order drill and calisthenics, as well as bayonet and gun drill, chemical warfare training, and various other subjects. Not only were the troops being trained, their equipment was brought up to standard. (61)

Artillery training concentrated on amphibious landings. This consisted of the loading and unloading of 105mm howitzers in DUKWS (amphibious trucks) on both land and water, and using A-frames to unload the howitzers. Naval and shore fire control parties were organized and trained to accompany infantry battalions to assist them prior to the artillery units going into action. (62)

Tank training involved the adaptation of tanks for use in amphibious operations. This proved very effective. However, one part of the training that did not go well was range firing. Field Artillery units were not able to secure adequate ranges.

and therefore went into combat without ever firing a round of 105mm at a target. (63)

Engineer units went through very rigorous training because they were the crucial link in neutralizing the enemy defenses. A majority of the engineer units had a great deal of combat experience and were veterans of amphibious operations. This proved to be important, since they were able to assist in the training of infantry, artillery, and other branches in demolitions, mine warfare, and the passage of obstacles. (64)

Units were able to rehearse assault landings on a division scale, to include naval and air support. Efforts were made to simulate exact conditions for the upcoming invasion. Obstacles were constructed resembling as much as possible those that could be expected on the beaches of southern France. The live firing of ammunition made battle conditions more dramatic and instructive. Detailed planning and executions were handled as if it were D-day. (65)

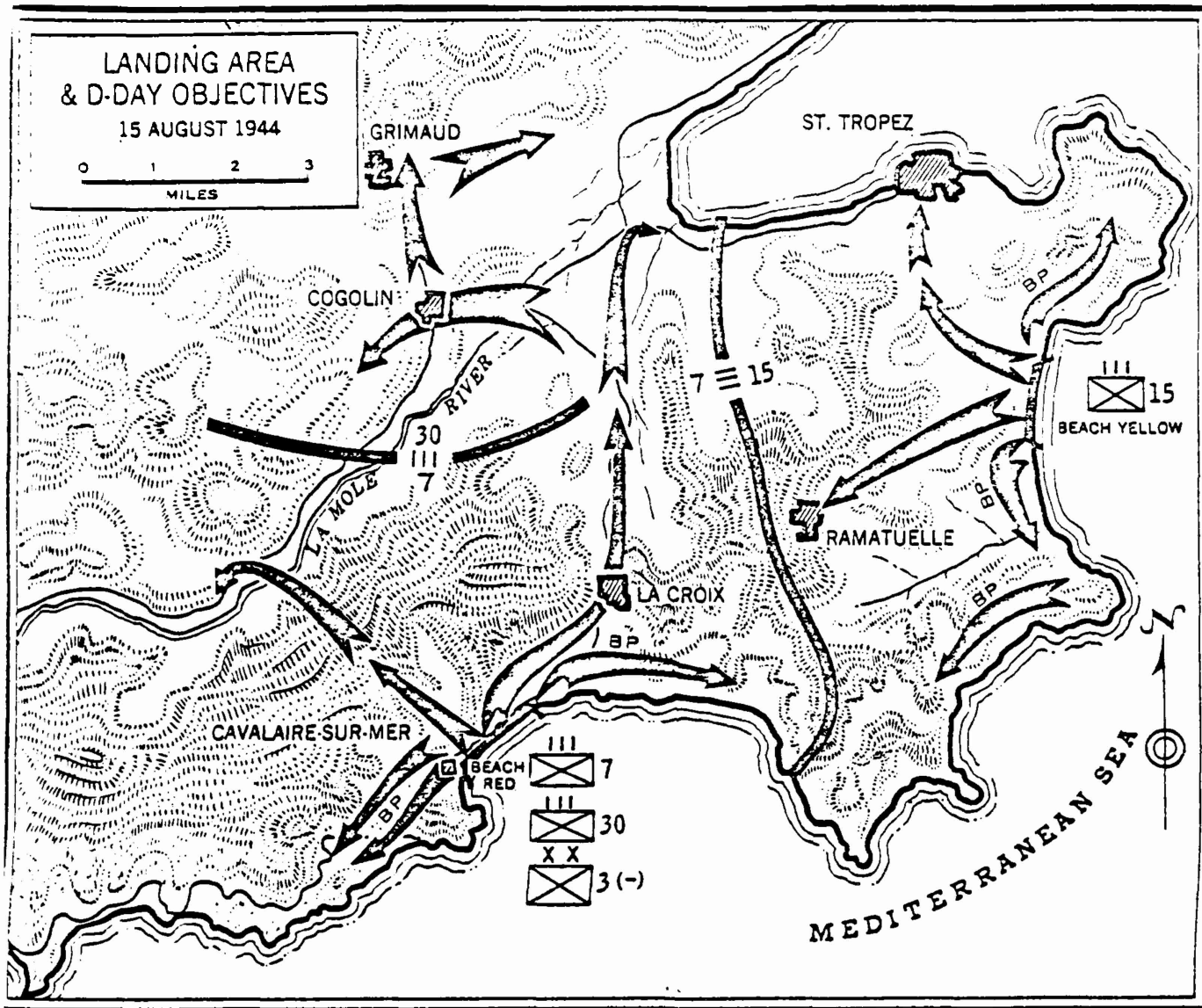
Although training time was limited for the 7th Army's invasion of southern France, it was realistic and effective. A key element of the training was the previous experience of the units involved. Their removal from combat and placement back into combat within a very short time was remarkable. On 8 August, the 7th Army returned from final rehearsals and began loading out. In less than a week, the units were involved in the operation for which they had been practicing. (66)



## THE 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION TACTICAL PLAN<sup>(67)</sup>

On the western flank of the main assault area, the 3rd Infantry Division (Alpha Force) was to land the 7th Infantry Regiment on Alpha Red Beach (Beach 259 on the Bay of Cavalaire) and the 15th Infantry Regiment on Alpha Yellow Beach (Beach 261 on the Bay of Fampelonne) in order to overcome enemy resistance and to capture the towns of Cavalaire and St Tropez (See Map D). The 30th Infantry Regiment was division reserve, to be landed at Alpha Red. Having cleared the peninsula, the division would link up with the 45th Division to clear beach 262, and from there advance to the west and southwest to join with the French Commandos (Romeo Force) and establish the Blue line on the west flank.

Alpha Red beach was backed by a narrow belt of tree-covered dunes behind which ran a highway and a narrow gauge railroad. To the southwest were wooded slopes and the town of Cavalaire-Sur-Mer. A few small streams traversed the area, but provided no impediment to advance of infantry. The defenses here were considered moderate with 3 or 4 casemates, a dozen pillboxes, and approximately 17 machine guns. Eight light anti-aircraft guns were located on the high ground beyond the beaches, and on the far western edge of the beach, four fixed medium caliber guns were emplaced. Concrete pyramids out to 60 yards from the beach had been constructed, and these were covered by artillery and machine gun fire. Approximately 800 yards of barbed wire ran along the width of beach 259, and the area was



MAP D: 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION ASSAULT PLAN

thoroughly mined. Intelligence reports indicated up to 250 German troops manned these defenses.

Alpha Yellow Beach stretched 4500 yards and consisted of soft sand and wooded slopes. Defenses here again were moderate, with a single row of piles about 150 feet off-shore, pillboxes, wire, and mine fields along the beach. Intelligence estimated about 400 men defending this area.

#### THE LANDING

From 0710 to 0745 hours on D-day, shallow mine sweepers cleared boat lanes from 1500 yards to within 100 yards of the beaches. Drone boats were used to clear the final 100 yards. From 0750 to 0758 hours, naval fire support placed rockets and inshore fire onto the beaches, producing an even pattern of barrage fire for assaulting troop cover.

At 0800 hours, the 7th RCT struck Alpha Red Beach while the 15th RCT attacked Alpha Yellow Beach. Each included a smoke detail, amphibious trucks, tank destroyers, naval shore fire control parties and an engineer section. The 7th RCT landed with the 3rd Battalion on the left and 2nd Battalion on the right, with the 1st Battalion serving as Regimental reserve. Several small landing craft were lost to mines during the assault, resulting in 60 casualties. One amphibious truck was also lost to mines. As the infantry moved out to the beach, it initially encountered no resistance, but was slowed by wire and wooden box

mines. After amphibious tanks, tank destroyers, and howitzers had landed, they encountered some small arms and mortar fire. Specially formed battle patrols, consisting of 155 men each, were employed in missions to neutralize coastal defense systems at both landing sites, and as the infantry suppressed the small arms fire, the engineers began clearing lanes through the mines and wire. At 0850 hours, the beaches were effectively neutralized, and the 30th RCT (the division reserve) began landing and moving through the right flank of the 7th RCT. Eight successive waves landed on beach 259, as the beachhead was steadily enlarged. The two RCT's advanced rapidly inward. The 7th turned westward with the 3rd Battalion advancing along the coastal road to clear Cavalaire-Sur-Mer. By 1330 hours, the 3rd Battalion had linked up with the French Commandos near Cape Negre. The 2nd Battalion on the right had advanced through the town of LaCroix to the high ground two miles north of the town. They were relieved by the 30th RCT at 1430 hours, and thereupon turned to advance to the southwest toward La Mole and highway 98, following the 1st Battalion.

Shortly after noon, the 1st Battalion had been relieved from reserve on the beach, had advanced inland for about four miles to Highway 98, then moved west along the highway to La Mole. By dark on the evening of D-day, the 7th RCT held a line from west of Cape Negre six miles inland to La Mole.

On the right flank of the 3rd Division, the 15th RCT had landed on Alpha Yellow Beach and subdued all beach defenses

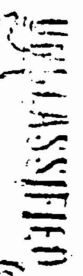
within 40 minutes. The infantry continued to advance inland against light opposition. The 1st Battalion cleared an enemy strongpoint on the northern portion of the beach, and attacked inland 5000 yards to seize the high ground northeast of the town Ramatuelle. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved to the north and northeast taking the high ground overlooking St Tropez. By 1830 hours, patrols of the 15th RCT had cleared the St Tropez peninsula of enemy troops, and after nightfall, the Regiment assembled west of St Tropez to march along roads to Collobrieres on the "Blue Line."

The 30th RCT, after passing through the 7th, moved inland toward Cogolin and Grimaud. At 2100 hours, patrols of the 30th contacted the 157th Infantry of the 45th Infantry Division between Grimaud and Les Cadelous, thus securing the right flank of the Alpha area.

#### CONSOLIDATION OF BEACHES

By 1200 hours on D-day, the assault units had reached their initial beachhead line and were advancing toward objectives on the "Blue Line" (See Map E). Unloading of supplies and equipment was proceeding satisfactorily, although hampered by off-shore bars at Alpha Yellow and mine fields and obstacles at Alpha Red. Difficulties did exist due to unexpected lack of resistance. Three quarters of the supplies loaded on LCT's were ammunition and a minimum of gasoline. The immediate breakthrough and rapid advance altered the anticipated requirements, making gasoline a

10



Major: E. J. ...

critical item. On Alpha Red, several disastrous encounters with mines occurred, which resulted in suspension of unloading on this beach until the mines were swept. Late in the afternoon of D-day, difficulties with the contemplated line of supply began to improve. By H+20 hours, all but 5 LCT's were completely unloaded, but unloading of ocean-type ships lagged far behind schedule.

By noon on D+1 (16 August), the lead elements of the 3rd Infantry Division were twenty miles inland. The rapid advance was due to a thin German defense in the landing area. This was proven by the interception of a German high command radio transmission which said: "No counterattack will be launched against the invasion forces until they have driven inland far enough so as to be out of effective range of the support of their own naval gunfire." (68)

Failure of the Germans to hold the forces in the immediate coastal area can be attributed to five major reasons:

1. They had disposed their divisions with reserves too far to the west.
2. Additional troops were committed piecemeal, mainly due to route interdiction and motor transport shortage.
3. Coastal units were weak and lacked air support, armor, and heavy artillery.

4. The German LXII Corps HQ was isolated from its command near Draquigman.

5. German defenders were harassed from the rear by French Resistance Forces.

The initial momentum allowed the expansion of the beachhead on either flank and permitted exploitations to the west (See Map F). The most logical entry into the interior was through the Argens River Valley, along Highway 7, which ran from Frejust west to Aix-en-Provence, and then northwest to Avignon. The 15th and 30th Regiments of the 3rd Infantry Division would move along Highway 7, while the 7th Infantry Regiment would take the southern route, Highway 98, which connects St Tropez with the town of Toulon. (69)

The advance along Highway 7 met only light resistance. The German defense amounted to little more than guerrilla warfare from isolated groups in an uncoordinated hasty defense for the next two days. By noon on D+2 (17 August), the division had captured nine towns, and the front lines ran from Cuers, through Gonfaron, to Le Luc. This rapid advance ran into resistance at 1840 on 17 August, when the 30th Infantry Regiment was stopped at the town of Brignoles, where the Germans were determined to block Highway 7 (See Map G). One day would be lost in preparation for the coordinated attack which would be necessary to take the town of Brignoles. The town was defended by approximately three



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# DIVISION MANEUVERS FROM THE BLUE LINE

NOTE: CASHED LINE REPRESENTS TASK FORCE OUTLINE.

FORTY-FIFTH

THIRD

INFANTRY

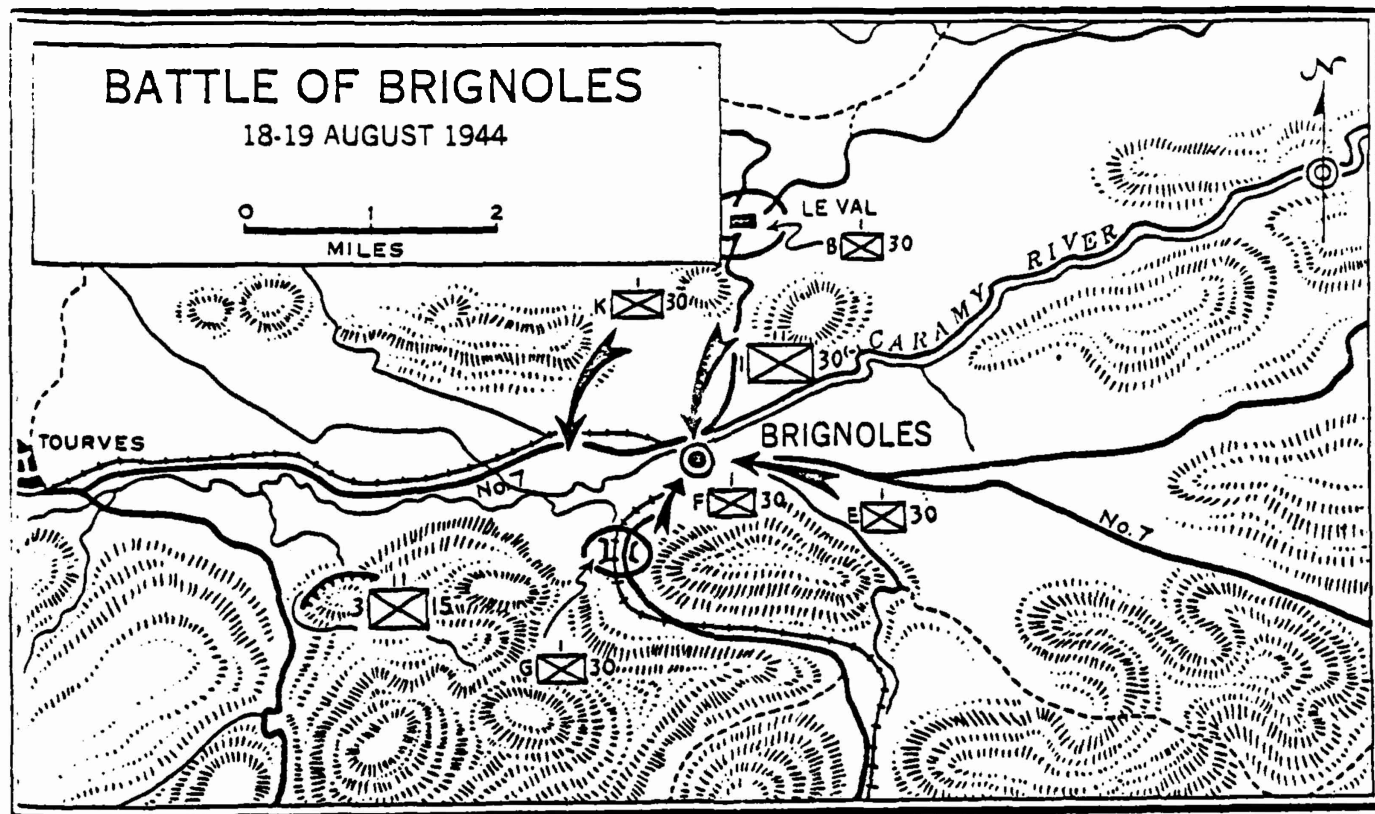
20 AUG 1964  
LEGISLATIVE DIVISION

DIVISION

11/10/51

**FRENCH ARMY**  
**"B"-**

NOTES



MAP G

battalions of Germans, mainly from the 338th Infantry Division. (70)

The plan of attack was to move astride the Flassan-Brignoles road with the 1st Battalion on the right on a flanking mission, and the 2nd Battalion on the left. H-hour was set for 0600 hours on D+3 (18 August). The attack went as planned, and Company B went north to the town of Le Val to protect the right flank, as Company G moved west from Besse to the high ground dominating Le Celle on the left flank. The main attack moved forward against heavy resistance. During the day Company F got around to the north of the town, and cut the road to the west. (71)

During the night of 18-19 August, the 3rd Battalion was committed to an envelopment to the north to cut the road west of town and continue toward Bras, as the 1st and 2nd Battalions worked into town. The attack was to begin at 0600 hours on D+4 (19 August). This was to be a three-pronged attack with companies attacking from the north, west, and south, to meet in the center of town. This broke the enemy resistance and the town was cleared by 1100 hours. (72)

The Germans had established a strong defense at Brignoles in an attempt to prevent Toulon from being isolated from the north. Virtually the entire 2nd Battalion of the 757th Regiment, 338th Infantry Division was destroyed in this action. (73)

Between noon on 19 August and noon on 20 August, the division moved nearly thirty miles by marching and motor transport. The 7th Infantry Regiment completed their mission along the coast road and moved inland to join the other regiments. The 15th Infantry Regiment pushed on past Tourves and toward Gardanne. The 1st Battalion took Auriol with no resistance. The 2nd Battalion found the town of Trets clear and moved on toward Gardanne. The 3rd Battalion had taken Tourves early in the afternoon of the 19th, after a 45 minute attack, and moved on toward the town of St Maximin. On the morning of the 20th, the 3d Battalion moved by truck to the town of Trets. (74)

The 30th Infantry Regiment reorganized in the vicinity of the town of Brignoles, following the fight there, and moved out on the afternoon of 19 August. The 1st and 3rd Battalions encountered no resistance as they moved along Highway 7 through St Maximin and on to Ollieres before midnight. The 2nd Battalion remained in reserve around Brignoles until 0400 hours on 20 August, when they moved up to join their regiment. (75)

Aix-en-Provence was the most important town in the vicinity, and it appeared the Germans were going to make another stand in this area. The fast movement of the 3rd Division forced the Germans to abandon the Rhone Triangle Defense, and withdraw the slow-moving infantry up the Rhone. Elements of the 11th Panzers were ordered into the areas around Aix-en-Provence, but they did not arrive with enough forces in enough time. (76)

Near Aix-en-Provence, the 3rd Reconnaissance Troop ran into an enemy roadblock late in the morning of 20 August (D+5). The strongpoint was made up of at least two antitank guns, two tanks, mortars, and infantry. The roads into the area were blocked by adjusted artillery and mortar fire. During the night of the 20th, several enemy planes flew over the area and dropped flares.<sup>(77)</sup> That same night, the 30th RCT established roadblocks to the west and south of the town. The 3rd Battalion drove west on the north side of Highway 7 to the outskirts of the town where they were fired on about dark on 20 August.<sup>(78)</sup>

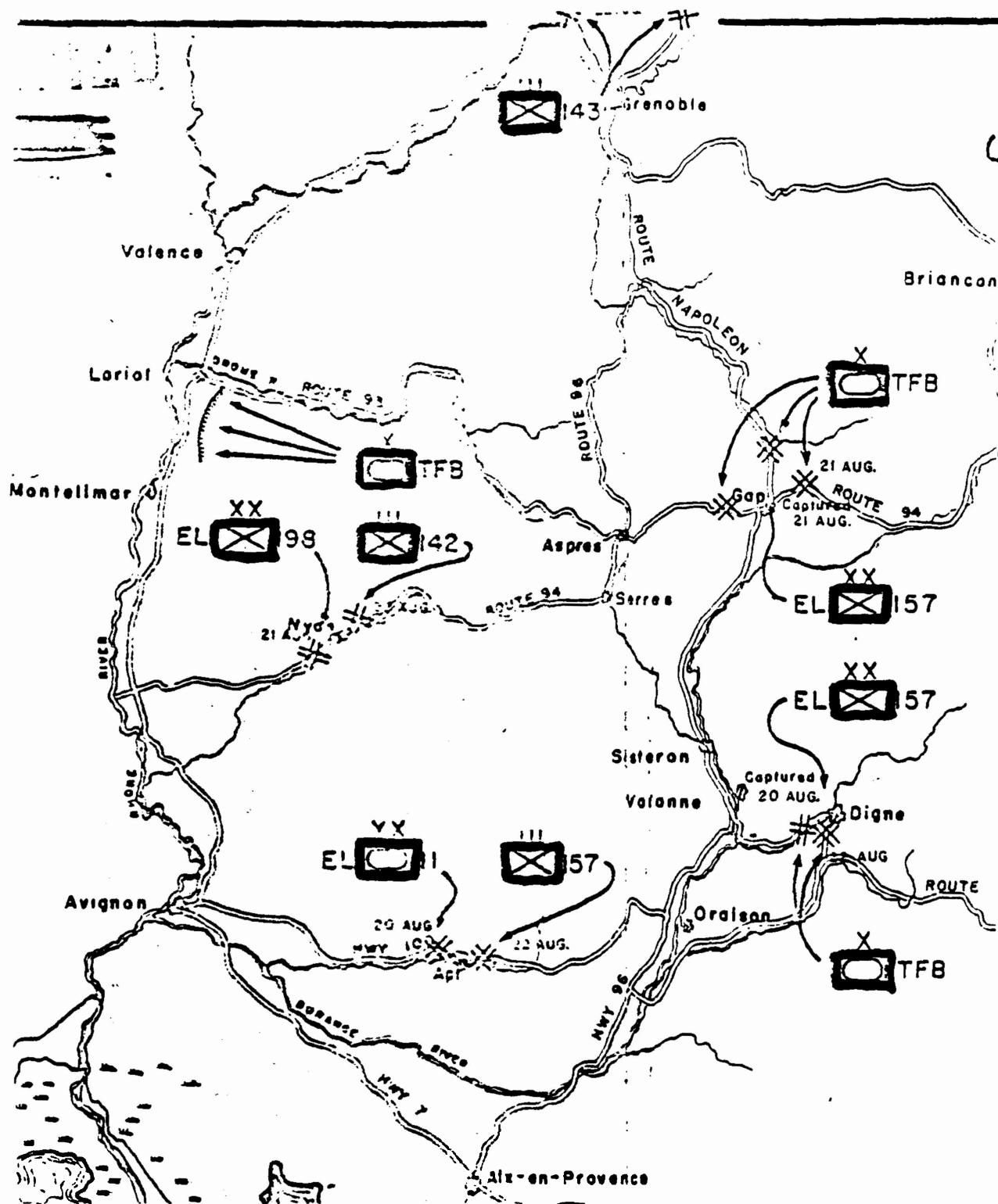
The 1st Battalion swung north of 3d Battalion positions, and then continued west. This allowed them to cut across four or five hub roads leading into the city. They established roadblocks about 15 km north of the city and fought about fifty bicycle-mounted Germans coming in from the north during the night), and were preparing for a dawn attack.<sup>(79)</sup>

A coordinated attack began at dawn on D+6 (21 August), with air support from the 7th Army. The 1st Battalion was to attack from the northwest, the 3rd Battalion from the north, and the 2nd Battalion from the east. The bulk of the armor was with the 3rd Battalion. As the attack began, 1st Battalion was attacked from the rear by enemy infantry, with strong armor support, attacking down Highway 7. The entire Battalion was needed to block this threat while the 3rd Battalion continued the attack. The town was cleared of the enemy by 1000 hours on 20 August.<sup>(80)</sup>

## THE OVERALL SITUATION IN THE MIDST OF THE BATTLE

By 21 August, 1944, the vigor and speed of the entire VI Corps attack had forced the Germans to withdraw northward out of Southern France via the Rhone River corridor<sup>(81)</sup> (See Map H). The plan was for the 3rd Infantry Division to pursue the Germans northward along the east bank of the Rhone River, while Task Force Butler (a composite mechanized force), followed by the 36th Infantry Division, was to make a wide sweep to trap enemy units in the Rhone River Valley in the vicinity of Montelimar. Montelimar is a town on the east bank of the Rhone, about 100 miles northwest of Marseilles. General Truscott, the Corps Commander, determined that seizing Montelimar would block all German routes of withdrawal up the Rhone corridor. The victims of this envelopment would be the 11th Panzer Division and the 198th, 716th, 189th, and 338th Infantry Divisions.

On August 22nd, Task Force Butler took up positions north of Montelimar. However, the Germans still owned three hill masses just north of Montelimar which were the key to control of the town and the highways running north and east of it. The Task Force at this time was not strong enough to take the town or close the valley route completely. It attempted to hold its positions against the increasing blows of the northward fleeing Germans until August 24th when the 36th Division arrived and assembled its strength north and northeast of Montelimar; then Task Force Butler became the division reserve. It was about this time that a copy of the 36th Division order that detailed the



MAP H: GOING FOR ENCIRCLEMENT (TF BUTLER AND <sup>36</sup>5TH DIV)

placement of its regiments to hold the Montelimar route fell into the hands of the enemy. As will be seen later, this plan was used to great advantage by the Germans.

From August 24th to August 27th, the 36th Division position at Montelimar was under constant pressure from the Germans. The first sign of what was to be the death trap of Montelimar was two trains destroyed by American artillery and tanks. By August 25th, the 3rd Division had advanced northward to Avignon. Now the Germans began to feel the pressure being applied from behind by the 3rd Division.

A major factor aiding the speed and success of the 3rd Division's northward advance was the activity of the French resistance groups. At the time of the ANVIL landing, there were about seventeen of these well organized and disciplined groups operating in southern France. These groups, known as the F. F. I. (Forces Francaise D'Interieure), swung into decisive action to aid the 3rd Division's advance to Montelimar. For example, the F. F. I. seized whole towns, and held them to await the American coming. They also coordinated sabotage activities with the Division's movement, set up roadblocks, laid ambushes, and more. (82)

#### THE FIGHT FOR MONTE LIMAR

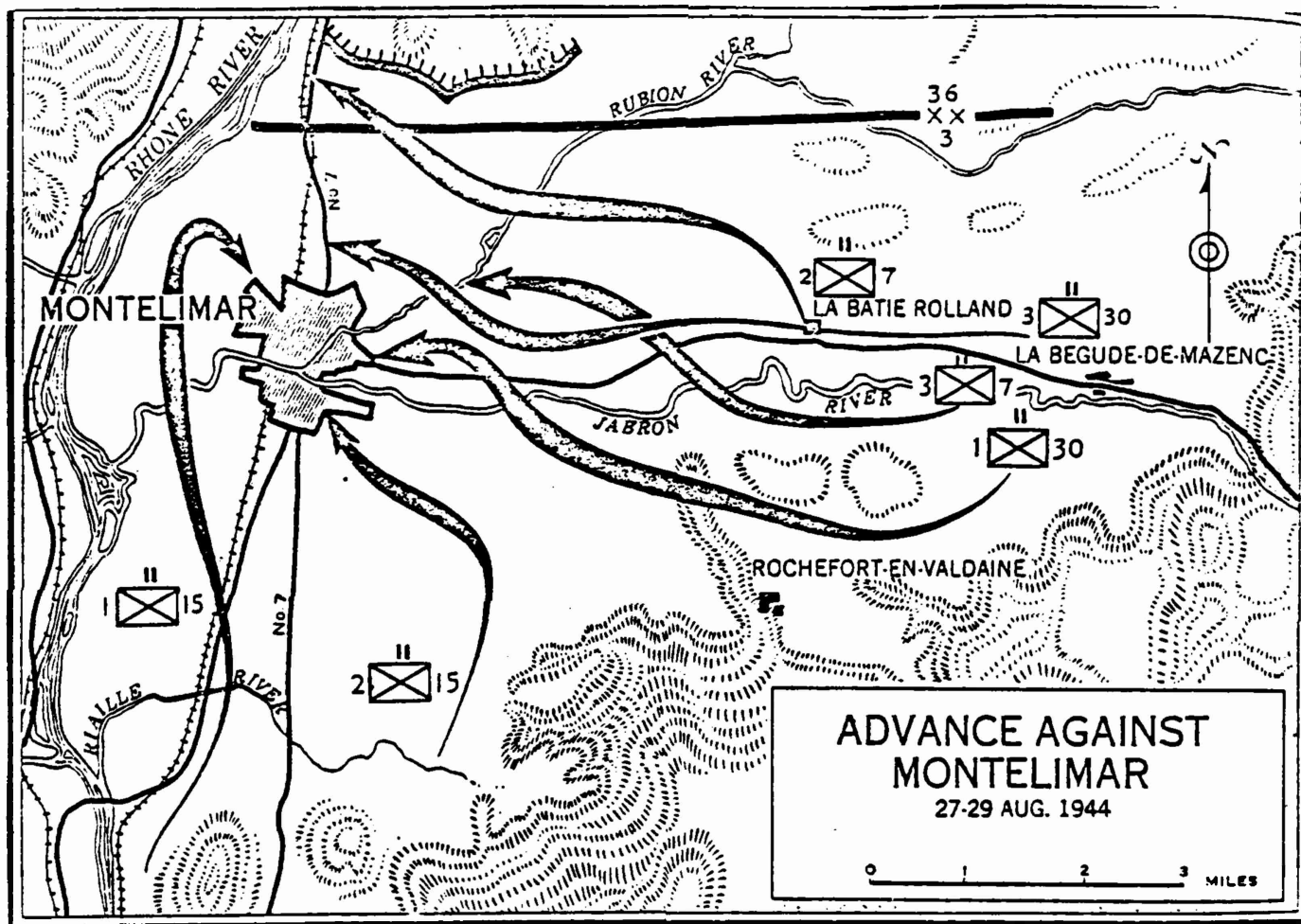
The 36th Division consolidated and held positions north of Montelimar, repulsing attack after attack, until the 26th, when



the Germans succeeded in breaking the Division roadblock on the east bank road. This happened to be the weakest point in the 36th Division's defensive perimeter, and the German breakthrough at this location was probably due to their knowledge of dispositions obtained from the captured order. The Germans attacked continuously and hit everywhere in a desperate attempt to extricate their trapped forces.

By August 27th, the 3rd Division was attacking northwest to clear the enemy out of the Orange-Nyons-Montelimar triangle, and was encountering strong enemy delaying actions. Near Montelimar, the heaviest German motor movements yet reported (a large column of tanks, armored vehicles, self-propelled guns, and half-tracks) were observed filtering northward. The 36th Division, although in an ideal spot for interception was unable to break loose from its own fight, and could not keep the enemy from filtering through. Enemy prisoners reported that as of August 27th, the bulk of the 11th Panzer Division had succeeded in passing through, but that the 198th Division was still trapped south of Montelimar.

On this same day, the 3rd Division broke through the delaying line against heavy opposition, and captured a two kilometer long, double column of German vehicles moving toward Montelimar (See Map I). They continued their attack on the 28th, striking Montelimar from the South, West, and North, and by noon on the 29th, they occupied the city, and all resistance east and south of Montelimar had ceased.



MAP I

On the morning of August 29th, the Germans strongly attacked north of Montelimar in an effort to break out with the remainder of the 198th Division. The 3rd Division repulsed the attack and captured the 198th Division's Commander, as well as vast stockpiles of abandoned equipment; yet many of the personnel in the trapped unit succeeded in escaping. (83)

The tactical situation now demanded that efforts be made to halt the enemy before he could complete crossing of the Drome River further north. Operations along the Drome River represented the final phase of the Battle of Montelimar. The Drome River was the last barrier in the German retreat northward to Lyon. The 36th Division repositioned its forces, and by August 27th, they had narrowed German escape routes to one. Air support and artillery harassed enemy traffic and destroyed bridges, but the Drome was fordable at most points during the month of August, so some forces still escaped. (84)

Overall, allied forces inflicted heavy losses on the German Army at Montelimar. They destroyed 4000 vehicles, tanks, and guns, as well as 2000 horses and 6 railway guns. By August 28th, over 42,000 prisoners were taken. Only a small fraction of the German 19th Army was able to "run the gauntlet" at Montelimar and escape with their equipment, and no division, except the 11th Panzer, escaped as an intact unit. (85)

The reasons for the success at Montelimar, and the ANVIL operation in general, were basic and included:

1. The use of battle-experienced commanders and troops.
2. Experienced planning staffs, most of whom had worked together in other Mediterranean operations.
3. Overwhelming air superiority.
4. Excellent Allied intelligence, in contrast to poor and inadequate intelligence on the German side.
5. Inherent weakness of enemy forces characterized by their lack of mobility, low morale, and low state of combat efficiency.
6. Early breakdown of German communication, command, and control.
7. Aggressive exploitation by troops of the US VI Corps. (86)

#### THE SITUATION AT THE CLOSE OF THE BATTLE

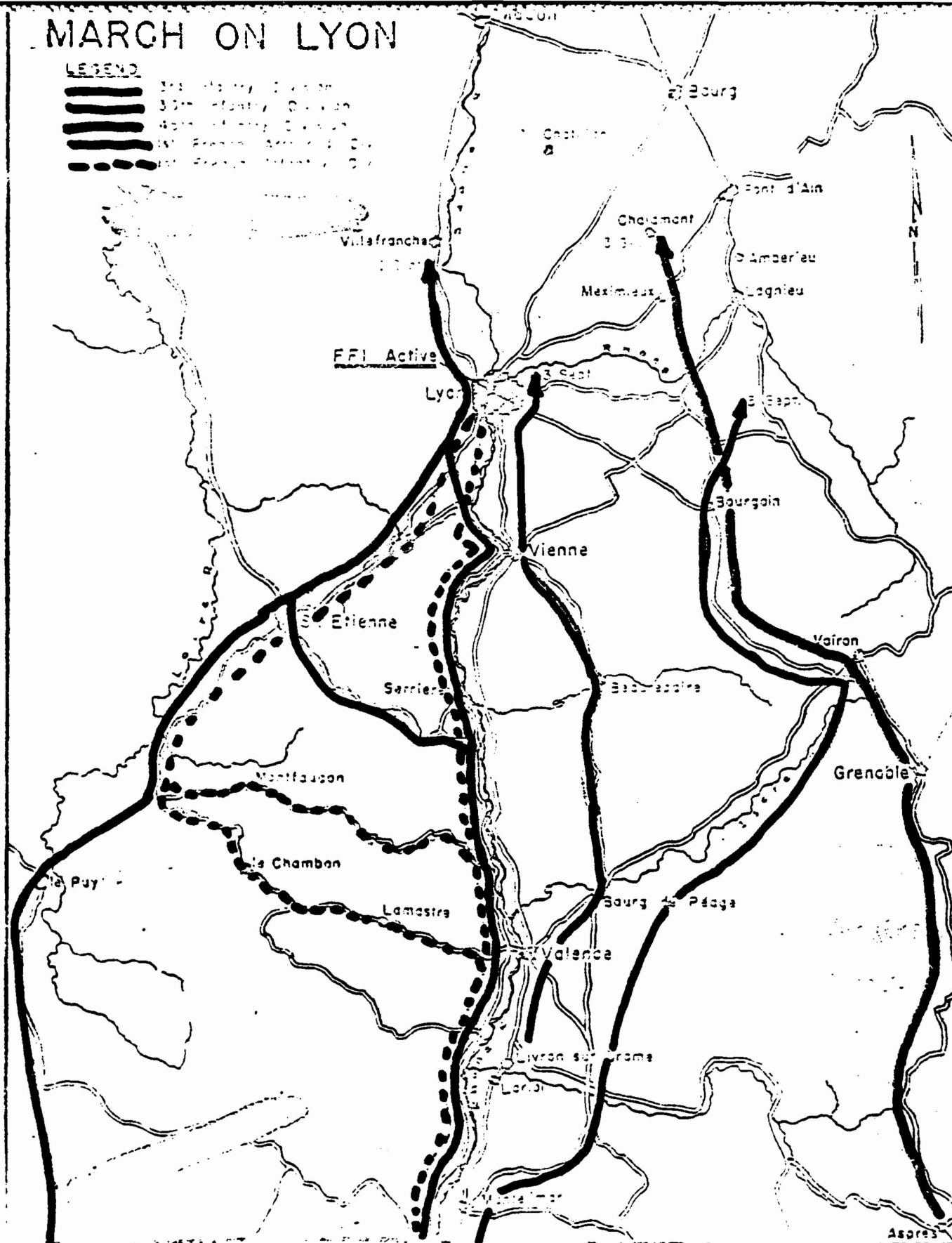
At the end of August, the Seventh Army had completed the liberation of southern France and was closing in on the city of Lyon (See Map K). On the eastern flank, patrols of the 1st Airborne Task Force reached the Italian border. In the north, the 36th and 45th Divisions had already crossed the Rhone River where it flows into Lyon from the high Alps to the east and were operating northeast of the city. The 3rd Division, after mopping up the Montelimar battle area, went into a reserve role near

MARCH ON LYON

### LEGEND



30th January, 1968  
30th January, 1968  
30th January, 1968  
30th January, 1968  
30th January, 1968



MAP K: PURSUIT TO THE NORTH

Voiron. On the west bank of the Rhone, below Lyon, units of French Army B were pushing the enemy northward, and French reconnaissance elements were advancing along the Mediterranean coast close to the Spanish border.

This marked the end of ANVIL-DRAGOON. From here on, the plan was to pursue the remainder of the German 19th Army, pushing it completely out of France, and to make contact with General Patton's American Third Army. (87)

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACTION

### IMMEDIATE

There is no doubt about the tactical decisiveness of Operation ANVIL/DRAGOON. Enemy resistance was so slight as to permit immediate exploitation northward, through Grenoble towards Lyons, allowing a link-up with the Third Army 28 days after the landing. The operation created a diversionary effect to assist OVERLORD, protected the right flank of the Third Army, and provided another major port on the continent.®®

However, the rapid progress toward the north was so unexpected that plans had not been made for that eventuality. For example, the Air Force P-47's operating out of Corsica had range difficulties by D+5. Fighter bombers were unable to operate at all in the northern sector near Grenoble. Logistics was supported from the assault beaches until mid-September when Marseilles and Toulon were seized. This created a supply line of 175 miles, one way.®® Consequently, although allied forces took advantage of the opportunities presented, they were unable to capitalized fully on them.

The immediate effect of the battle's outcome to allied forces was the ejection of German forces from Southern France; the interjection of Free French forces into the fighting with corresponding enhancement of the political situation among the allies; the availability to the allies of a major port complex (Marseilles/Toulon); the benefit deriving from two fronts in France; and the morale-enhancing factor of a truly successful major operation. As far as the Germans were concerned, the impact of the operation was severe. The seven German divisions opposing the invasion were eliminated as fighting units. Most Axis troops in Southwestern France were surrounded and Germany was forced to divert its attention from Normandy.

The battle provided a significant disadvantage for the Germans. As Allan Wilt states in his book The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944<sup>90</sup>, "No matter how depleted the Axis forces were, the Germans still had to keep considerable numbers of formations positioned along France's Mediterranean coast. In this sense, particularly after August 7, when the Germans knew that the allies were definitiely building up their forces for an attack, DRAGOON did restrain the Wehrmacht from sending additional men and material North. This, a threat alone would not have



accomplished." Also, the inescapable fact remains that 79,000 prisoners were taken during the operation at a time when Germany could least afford it. In addition, the seizing of Toulon and Marseilles precluded, almost completely, the use of enemy ships and aircraft in the western Mediterranean.<sup>91</sup>

#### LONG TERM

There is some disagreement as to whether the outcome of the battle affected the long-term objectives of the allies. Churchill believed the Mediterranean invasion was unnecessary so far as it related to supporting the Normandy landings, and he believed the forces could be better used to support the allied effort in Italy, or even an invasion of the Balkans. Chester Wilmot, an Australian historian, believed that Operation ANVIL distorted allied strategy in the Mediterranean and the West, "to the immediate benefit of Hitler and the ultimate advantage of Stalin."<sup>92</sup> The battle did not place the German Army in a position from which it could not recover, in the sense that they would have been ultimately defeated with or without a Mediterranean invasion. Such an outcome was simply a matter of time after the

Normandy breakout. By virtue of the same reasoning, the battle did not decide the outcome of the war. One can say that the outcome of the war in Europe was decided when Operation OVERLORD was approved for execution. The battle ranks in importance with the allied landings in Sicily which were also a spectacular tactical success, but did not decide the outcome of the Italian campaign.

#### *MILITARY LESSONS LEARNED*

A study of Operation Dragoon completed in 1946 by the Command Class of the USACGSC is very valuable for analyzing military lessons learned. The study was done shortly after the war, with corresponding benefit of being written by combat veterans with access to the necessary documents. A selection of observations taken from that study follows:<sup>93</sup>

a. "Operation Dragoon confirmed the soundness of our known doctrine and techniques in the planning and mounting of an amphibious operation...Few if any new strategic principles were employed and no important new doctrine was developed. The main lesson was a re-emphasis of the fact that when sound principles are applied to a sound plan, and both are

aggressively implemented, the results, far outreaching those anticipated, may be obtained."

b. "The necessity for additional emphasis on inter-theater liaison in planning was brought out. It appears that Operation DRAGOON suffered in its early stages from a lack of complete knowledge of the plans for OVERLORD."

c. "The French Forces of the interior were utilized to good advantage. Their control was turned over to the French Commander. Prior to D-Day they were invaluable in their assistance, and demonstrated that their sabotage work, when properly directed, could in some cases be more effective than air bombardment and certainly less odious to the civilian population."

d command to local commanders, always a characteristic of American operations, permitted sound local decisions to be made, with a resultant aggressive pursuit of the enemy."

e. "More flexibility is needed in logistical planning to provide for changes in the situation. The rapid advance north, demonstrated that although great effort on the part of all services can continue the support of an army beyond its

normal expectations, that there are, nevertheless, physical limitations to the support which can be obtained across the beaches."

f. "Guerrilla assistance was exploited more than ever before, and proved to be an invaluable asset, rather than a *bonus* as it had been previously been considered."

In the after-action report of the 36th Infantry Division, strong praise was given to the interaction of infantry and artillery. One paragraph deserves to be repeated here, since it is such a resounding vote for the combined arms concepts which motivate the U.S. Army today:

**Combat Teams:** "Regimental combat teams of infantry divisions, consisting of one regiment of infantry and one battalion of artillery, have in this operation, proved to be the most effective method of organization for combat for fast moving action and action on a wide front in the face of either scattered or determined and concentrated enemy resistance. The combat team referred to herein is one whose composition is permanent. It is permanent in that the infantry regiment and the field artillery battalion always work together. They are practically inseparable. The forward observers and liaison officers live with their

supported infantry units constantly. The field artillery battalions march with and bivouac with their infantry team regiment in combat and out. This procedure has fused the infantry and artillery personnel into a partnership based upon mutual respect, pride, sympathy, and understanding. So effective is the fusion of units that each feels that the other can do no wrong. The result is a highly efficient combination of branches of the service."24

Finally, another excellent series of tactical lessons learned can be taken from an Army Ground Forces after-action report submitted by the European Theater of Operations War Department Observers Board concerning Seventh Army operations, which was submitted in February, 1945. A selection of observations follows:

a. "The longer the division (36th) stayed in the line, the greater the incidence of disciplinary problems and psychosis cases, as reflected in the increasing number of courts-martial, stragglers, and hospital admissions for *exhaustion*. It was observed that sending a small group of men and officers on rotation and temporary duty to the U.S. during the latter part of this period caused a lift in the morale of the entire division out of all proportion to the number who actually benefitted."

b. "Infantry officers have effectively directed artillery fire on several occasions. All infantry officers should be able to sense and adjust artillery fire."

c. "When approaching towns, we have found that shooting up the highest buildings pays dividends. This has reduced artillery and mortar fire. Two rounds of HE delay and one round of smoke discourage observers."

d. "The enemy has been known to boobytrap stockpiles of engineer materials. On one occasion personnel of the battalion (48th Engineer) sustained injuries when they attempted to fill holes in the road from a conveniently located gravel stockpile, which exploded when a shovel was thrust into it."

e. "This operation conclusively proved that it is impractical to load bulk supplies on LST's on initial lifts."

f. "In an amphibious operation, divisions should land at 15% overstrength in order to provide sufficient effective strength to continue efficient operations until the flow of replacements can be assured."

g. "It is advisable in the initial phase of assault to place a replacement company with 600 or 700 replacements in immediate support of each division."

h. "Initially, necessary personnel must be provided to plan and execute the early phases of an amphibious operation, and at the same time permit G3 representation at all major ports of embarkation, and subordinate, adjacent, and higher headquarters in the field. As operations progress, and as control improves, these personnel requirements may be reduced."

i. "There is never enough army labor. It is imperative that a civilian labor procuring agency be set up immediately--on D-Day, if the beaches are clear. It was learned that only by offering C Rations as part payment could labor be procured. Food was the incentive--not money."

j. "Political problems in any *liberated* country should be entirely resolved locally by the inhabitants themselves with allied support of a central government to which local officials can look for authority and general administration." 93

## ENDNOTES

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- (3) Greenfield, p. 384.
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- (5) Alan F. Wilt. The French Riviera Campaign of August 1944). (Southern Illinois University Press, 1981), p. 4.
- (6) Wilt, p.26.
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- (8) Greenfield, p. 394.
- (9) Greenfield, p. 394.
- (10) Command and General Staff School, 2d Command Class. Operation Dragoon (Recent Operations Subcourse). (Fort Leavenworth, 1946), p.3.
- (11) 2d Command Class, p.3.
- (12) Combined Chiefs of Staff. Operation Anvil (Southern France). Unpublished planning document. (London, 7 January, 1944), p.3.
- (13) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.7.
- (14) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.7.
- (15) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.6.
- (16) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.6.
- (17) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.6.
- (18) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.7.



- (19) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.46-49
- (20) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.46-47
- (21) Combined Operations Headquarters. Bulletin Y/42: Operation Dragoon. Limited Distribution Memorandum. (London, December, 1944), para 25.
- (22) Combined Operations Headquarters, para 16.
- (23) Combined Operations Headquarters, para 16(b), 21(b).
- (24) Combined Operations Headquarters, para 20(d), 20(f), 21(c).
- (25) Combined Chiefs of Staff, pp. 71-72.
- (26) Combined Operations Headquarters, para. 19.
- (27) Combined Chiefs of Staff, p.52.
- (28) This evaluation of 19th Army is drawn from the post-war essays of LTG Georg von Sodenstern and LTG Friederich Weise, successive commanders of 19th Army and Colonel Fritz Schulz, 19th Army Operations Officer. See Colonel Fritz Schulz, "Nineteenth Army: 15 August -- 15 Sept 1944, " unpublished manuscript from Office of Chief of Military History (OCMH) MS-B-514, dated 1946, 47 pages. Also see LTG Gerog von Sodenstern, "Southern France -- Preparation for Invasion," OCMH MS-B-276, dated 1946, 59 pages and LTG Friederich Weise, "Nineteenth Army -- 1 July -- 15 September 1944," OCMH MS-B-787, no date, 39 pages.
- (29) A brief biographical sketch of Blaskowitz is included as a cover sheet to one of his manuscripts done for the U.S. Historical Section. Blaskowitz committed suicide shortly before going on trial as a war criminal. See Johannes Blaskowitz, "Army Group G: 10 May -- 22 September 1944," unpublished manuscript by the Office of Military History (OCMH), MS-B-800, dated 1947, 33 pages. Also, Blaskowitz, "German Reaction to the Invasion of Southern France," (OCMH) MS-A-868, dated 1945, 4 pages and "German Estimate of the Situation Prior to the Allied Invasion of Southern France," (OCMH) MS-B-421, dated 1947, 3 pages.
- (30) von Sodenstern, p. 43.
- (31) Schulz, p. 13.
- (32) von Sodenstern, p. 21.

(33) Weise, p. 4.

(34) The division arrived with no artillery, 150 men left in the engineer battalion but no equipment, an armored infantry battalion, half its signal battalion but no equipment and miscellaneous other troops. Its division staff and rear services were intact, having lost only about 10% of their strength. Between 20 July and 19 August, it had received 4000 infantry replacements, 1200 artillerymen, guns and ammo trucks and was considered 60-80% strength. BG W. Richter, "Southern France: 15 August -- 15 September 1944," unpublished manuscript, (OCMH) MS-A-875, undated, 11 pages.

(35) von Sodenstern, p. 35.

(36) Blaskowitz, Schulz, and others note these indicators in their comments on the battle. Blaskowitz, B-421, p. 2 and Schulz p. 11.

(37) LTG Hans Roettinger, "OB Southwest Effect of the Southern France Invasion on Italy," unpublished manuscript by (OCMH) MS-B-330, dated 1947, 10 pages. The Third U.S. Infantry Division, the most experienced division in Europe in making amphibious assaults, was one of the units chosen.

(38) MG Wend von Wietersheim, "11th Panzer Division: Southern France," unpublished manuscript, (OCMH) MS-B-805, 1945, p. 1.

(39) LTG Weise, the 19th Army Commander after 30 June took a variety of measures to try to improve the defenses but time and resources were unavailable. Probably the most effective measure was the collecting of bridging and ferrying equipment on the Rhone. Even in this the Navy had refused to release critical items until the invasion was imminent. Weise, p. 9.

(40) MG Baptist Kniess, "Comments on the History of the U.S. Seventh Army," unpublished manuscript (OCMH) MS-B-376 G, 1947. Kniess was the commander of LXXXV Corps which assumed control of the battle east of the Rhone. He states that U.S. reconnaissance failed to detect the movement of 157 Reserve Mountain Division to the east. Only remnants of two battalions and a regional defense battalion were opposing TF Butler.

(41) The 11th Panzer Division captured an American Operations Order on the 24th of August that greatly assisted the German planners.

(42) See Weise, p. 23. for details of the breakout. All the German commanders consider their miraculous escape the result of good discipline among the German units and the cautious advance of the Allies. Most agree with Kniess that a concentrated attack by TF Butler and 36th Infantry Division at La Coucourde would have sealed the fate of those German forces east of the Rhone and probably all of the Nineteenth Army. Kniess, p. 5; also von Wietersheim, pp. 1-1; Schulz, pp. 29-30; unidentified German author (probably MG Botsch, Chief of Staff of 19th Army) in "German Opinion of U.S. Seventh Army Operations in Southern France," unpublished manuscript, no office or publisher, dated 1948.

(43) Command and General Staff School, 1st Command Class, Operation Anvil (Dragoon) Southern France 15 August 1944. (Fort Leavenworth, 14 January 1946) p. 1. Also, Seventh U.S. Army After Action Report: Seventh Army in Southern France and Germany 1944-1945. (Heidelberg Aloys Graf, 1946) pp. A3-A4 (pages beginning A are from the Phase I Volume, those beginning B are from the Phase II Volume).

(44) 1st Command Class, p. 5, and Seventh Army, pp. 1, 4-5, 11, 13.

(45) 1st Command Class, pp. 20, 23.

(46) 1st Command Class, pp. 63, 77.

(47) 1st Command Class, pp. 12-13. Also, Seventh Army, pp. 80-83.

(48) Headquarters, Service of Supply, North African Theater of Operations. Chronological Record. (No city, August 1944), p. 5.

(49) Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, Headquarters, Service of Supply, North African Theater of Operations, "Weekly Status Reports-Operation Dragoon #1 thru #29." (No City, January 1944 thru 14 August 1944).

(50) Rueben E. Jenkins. "Operation Dragoon: Planning and Landing Phase," Military Review, August 1946, p. 3.

(51) Headquarters, Service of Supply, report for 4 April 1944.

(52) Historical Division, United States Forces European Theater. The Administrative and Logistical History of the European Theater of Operations, Part VIII: Supplying the Armies. (No City, March 1946), not page numbered.

(53) Historical Division, United States Forces European Theater, not page numbered.

(54) Historical Division, United States Forces European Theater, not page numbered.

(55) Historical Division, United States Forces European Theater, not page numbered.

(56) Historical Division, United States Forces European Theater, not page numbered.

(57) Blanche D. Coll, Jean E. Keith, and Herbert H. Rosenthal. The Corps of Engineers[ Troops and Equipment, United States Army in World War II. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1958), p. 36.

(58) Lucian K. Truscott, Jr.. Command Missions. (New York, E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1954), p. 398.

(59) 1st Command Class, pp. 15-16. Also, Seventh Army, pp. 10, 24.

(60) Seventh Army, pp. A102-A104.

(61) Seventh Army, pp. A106-A109.

(62) Seventh Army, pp. A109-A110.

(63) Seventh Army, pp. A110-A111.

(64) Seventh Army, pp. A112-A115.

(65) Seventh Army, pp. A117-A118.

(66) Seventh Army, pp. A112-A113.

(67) This description in this section is drawn from Donald G. Taggart. History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II. (Washington, D.C.: Infantry Journal Press, 1947).

(68) Taggart, pp. 210-211.

(69) Seventh Army. P. B228.

(70) Taggart, pp. 213.

(71) Taggart, pp. 214-215.

- (72) Taggart, pp. 215.
- (73) Seventh Army, P. B229.
- (74) Taggart, pp. 215.
- (75) Taggart, pp. 215.
- (76) 2d Command Class, p. C-4.
- (77) Seventh Army, P. B229.
- (78) Taggart, pp. 216.
- (79) Taggart, pp. 216.
- (80) Taggart, pp. 216.
- (81) 1st Command Class, p. G-1.
- (82) Taggart, pp. 217.
- (83) 1st Command Class, p. G-7.
- (84) Seventh Army, P. B294.
- (85) 1st Command Class, pp. G-1 thru G-8
- (86) 1st Command Class, pp. H-1 thru H-2
- (87) Seventh Army, P. B334.
- (88) 2d Command Class, p. 1.
- (89) 1st Command Class, p. E-10.
- (90) Wilt, p. 166.
- (91) Wilt, p. 168.
- (92) Wilt, p. 165.
- (93) 2d Command Class, p. E-1.
- (94) AGF Board. Report A-217-3: Medditteranean Theater of Operations. (Washington D.C.: 1945).
- (95) AGF Board. Report C-630: Combat and Staff Lessons, 7th Army, Invasion of Southern France. (Washington D.C.: 1945).

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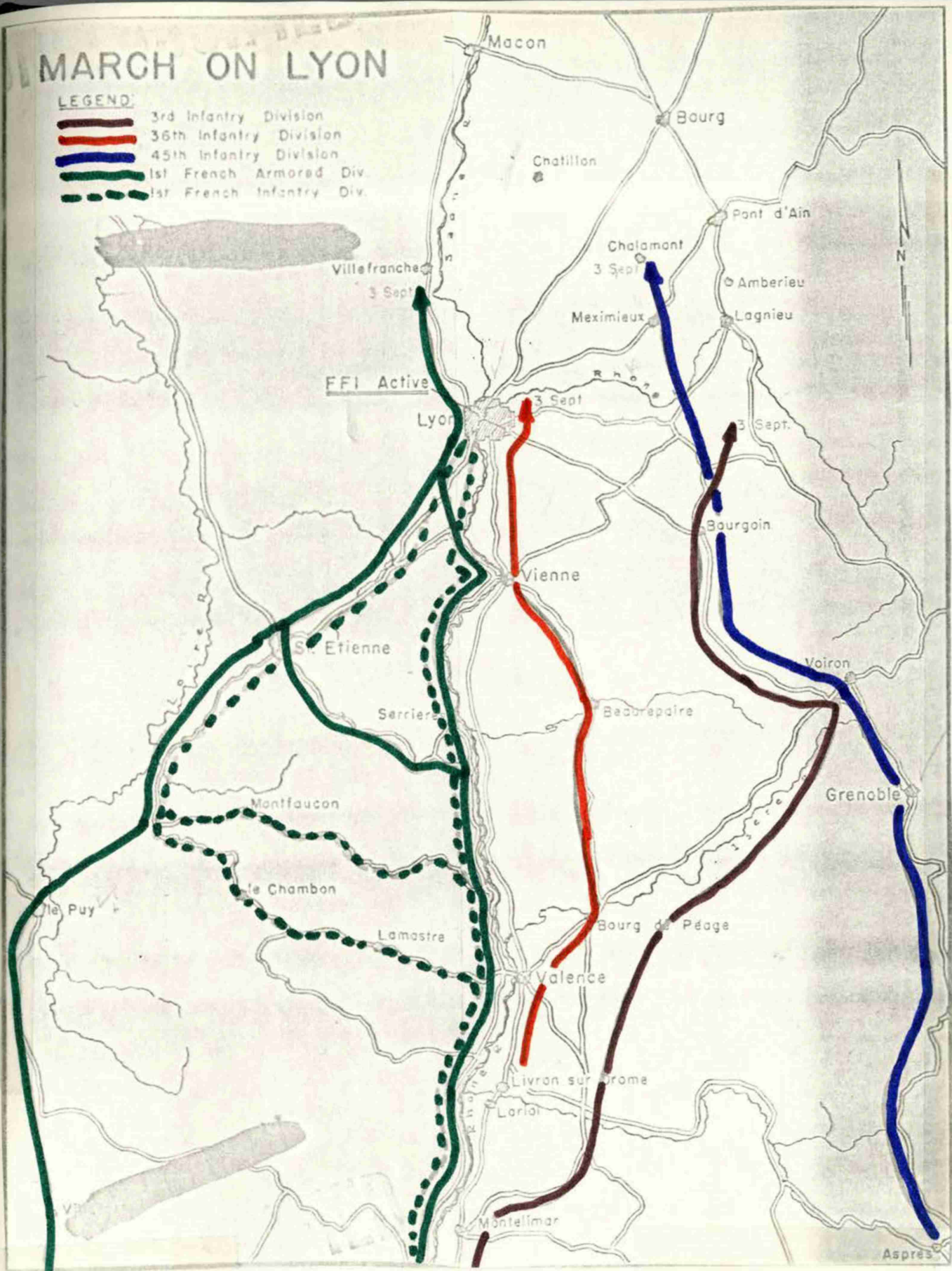
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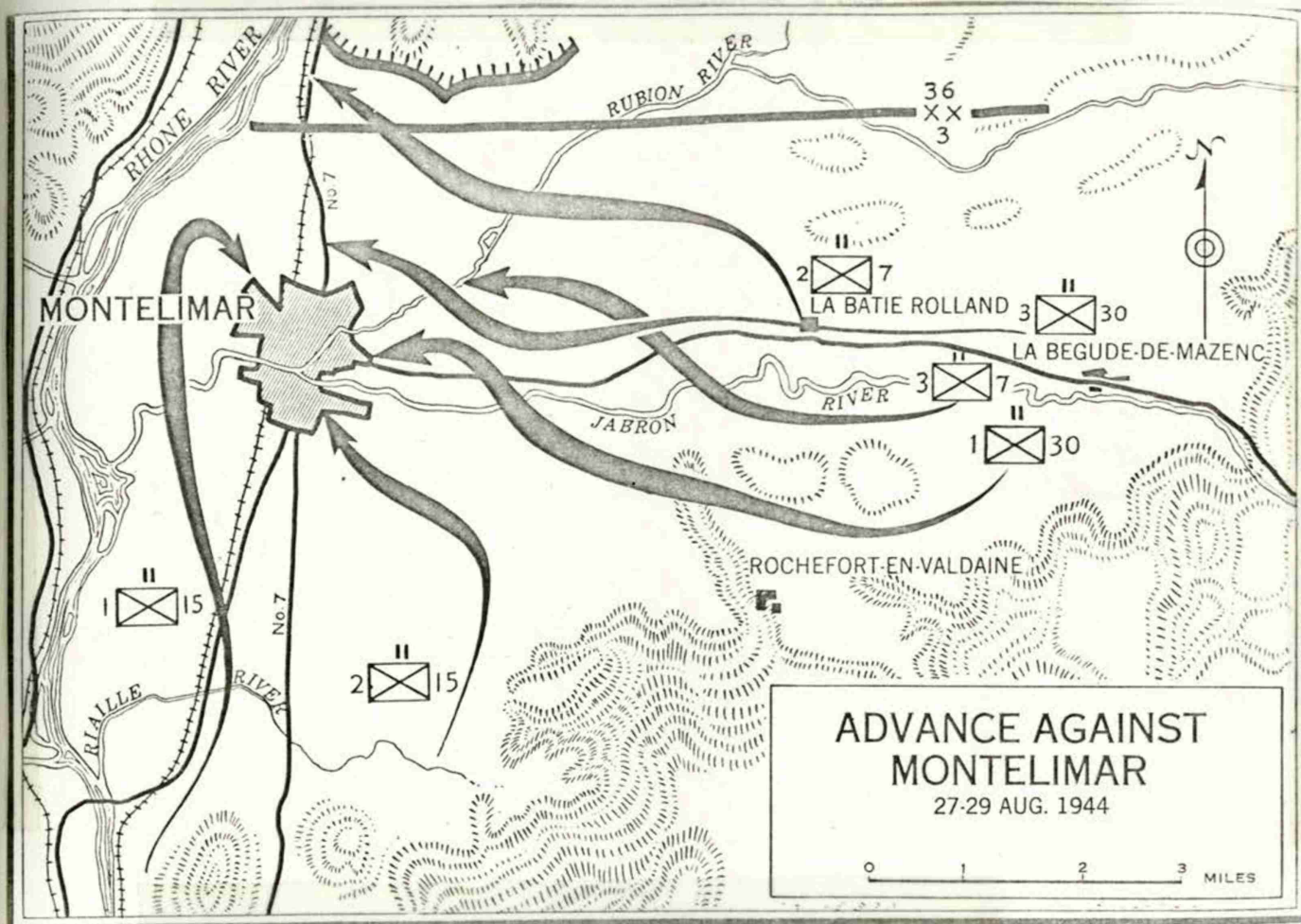
# MARCH ON LYON

## LEGEND

- 3rd Infantry Division
- 36th Infantry Division
- 45th Infantry Division
- 1st French Armored Div.
- - - 1st French Infantry Div.



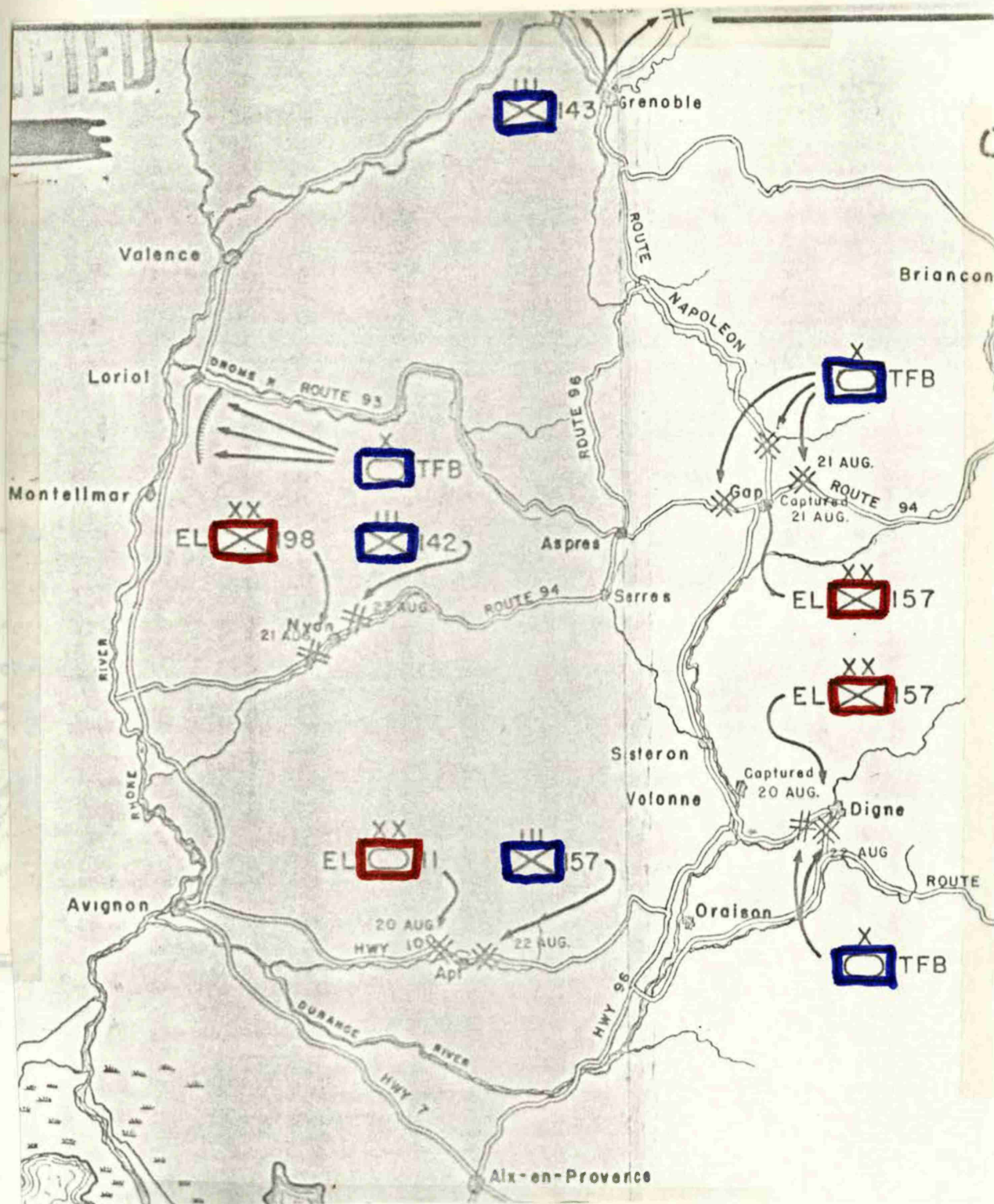
MAP K: PURSUIT TO THE NORTH



MAP I

MAP II: GOING FOR ENCLOSURE (TF BUTLER AND 1ST DIV)





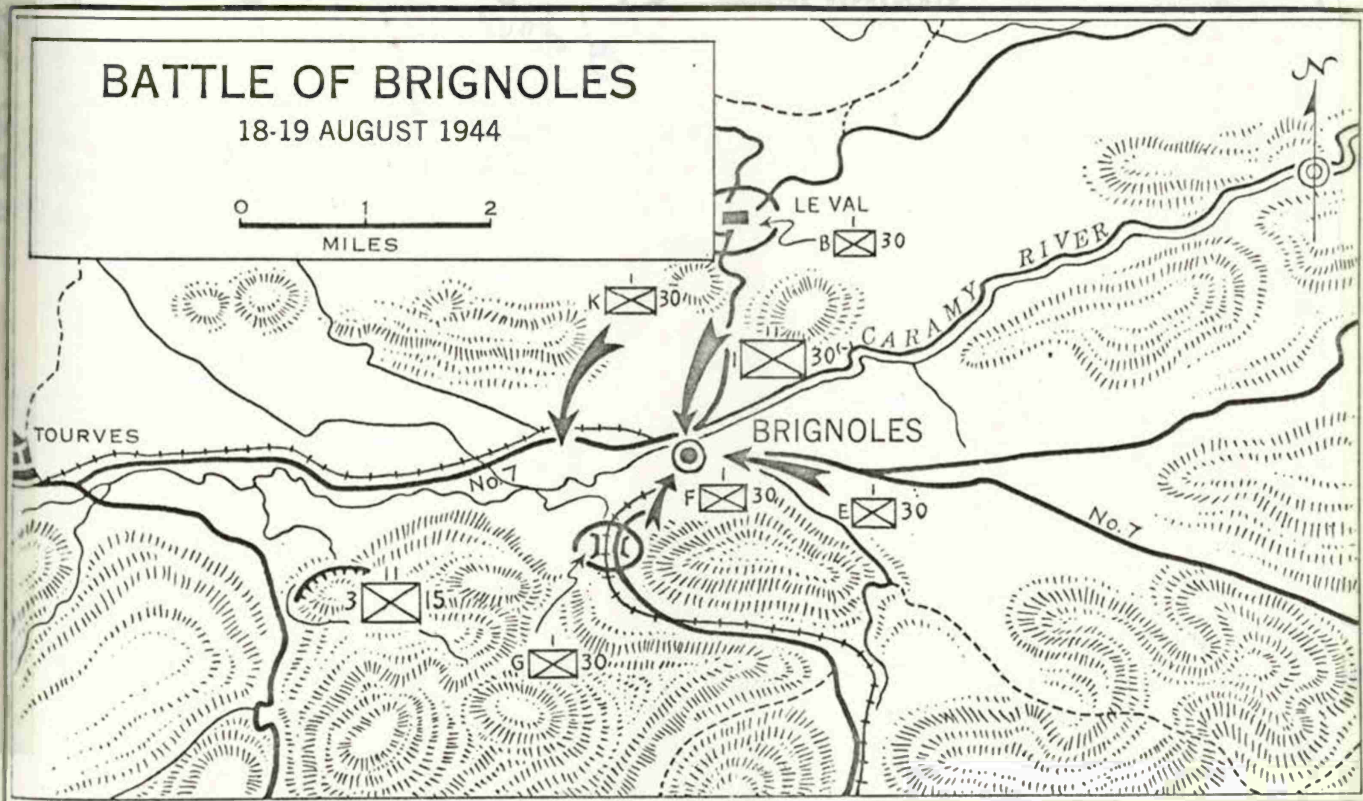
MAP H: GOING FOR ENCIRCLEMENT (TF BUTLER AND <sup>36</sup>~~45~~TH DIV)

ON MANEUVERS  
FROM THE BLUE LINE

# BATTLE OF BRIGNOLES

18-19 AUGUST 1944

0 1 2  
MILES



MAP G



UNCLASSIFIED

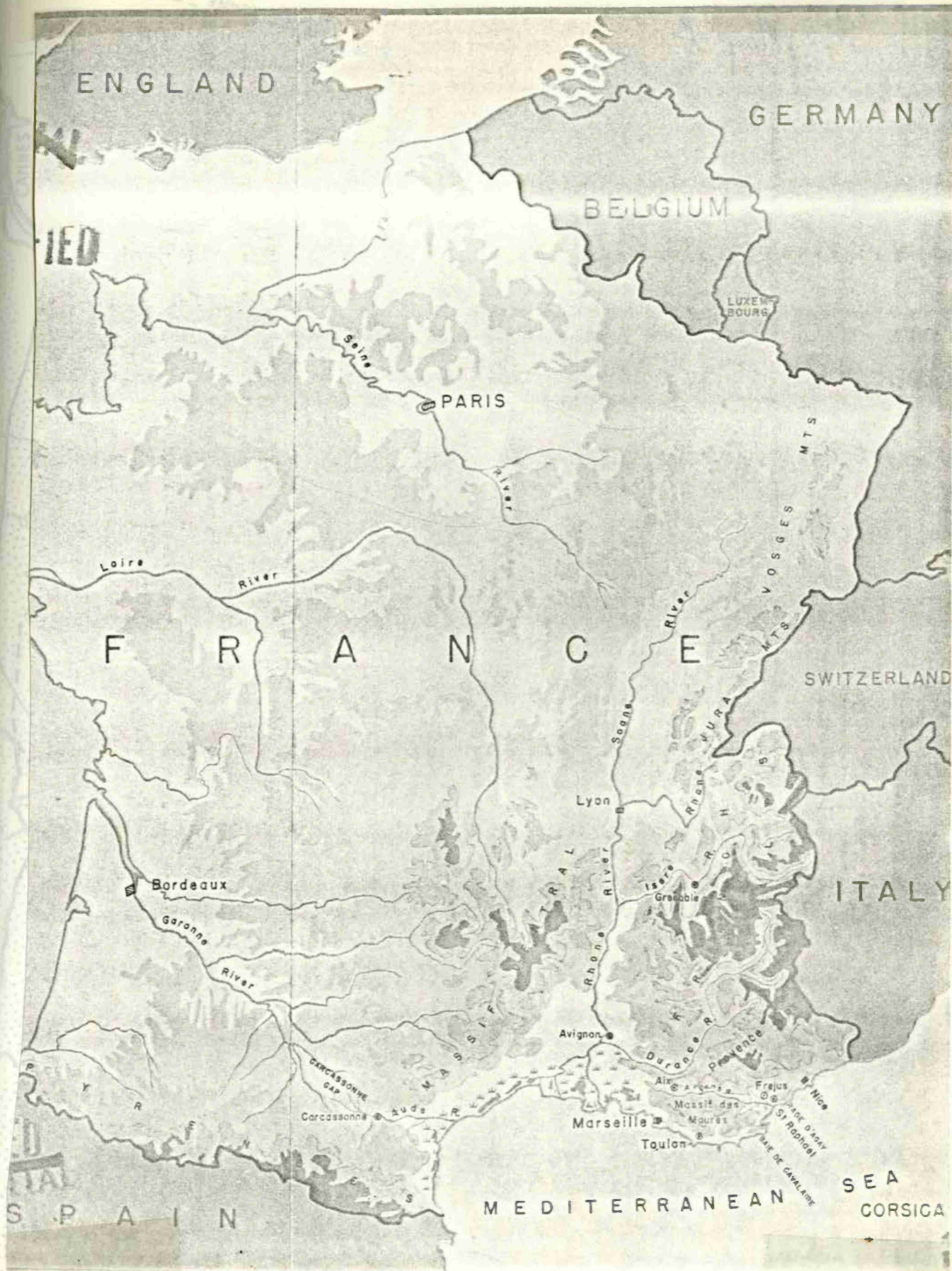


# DIVISION LANDINGS & <sup>FORCE</sup> MANEUVERS

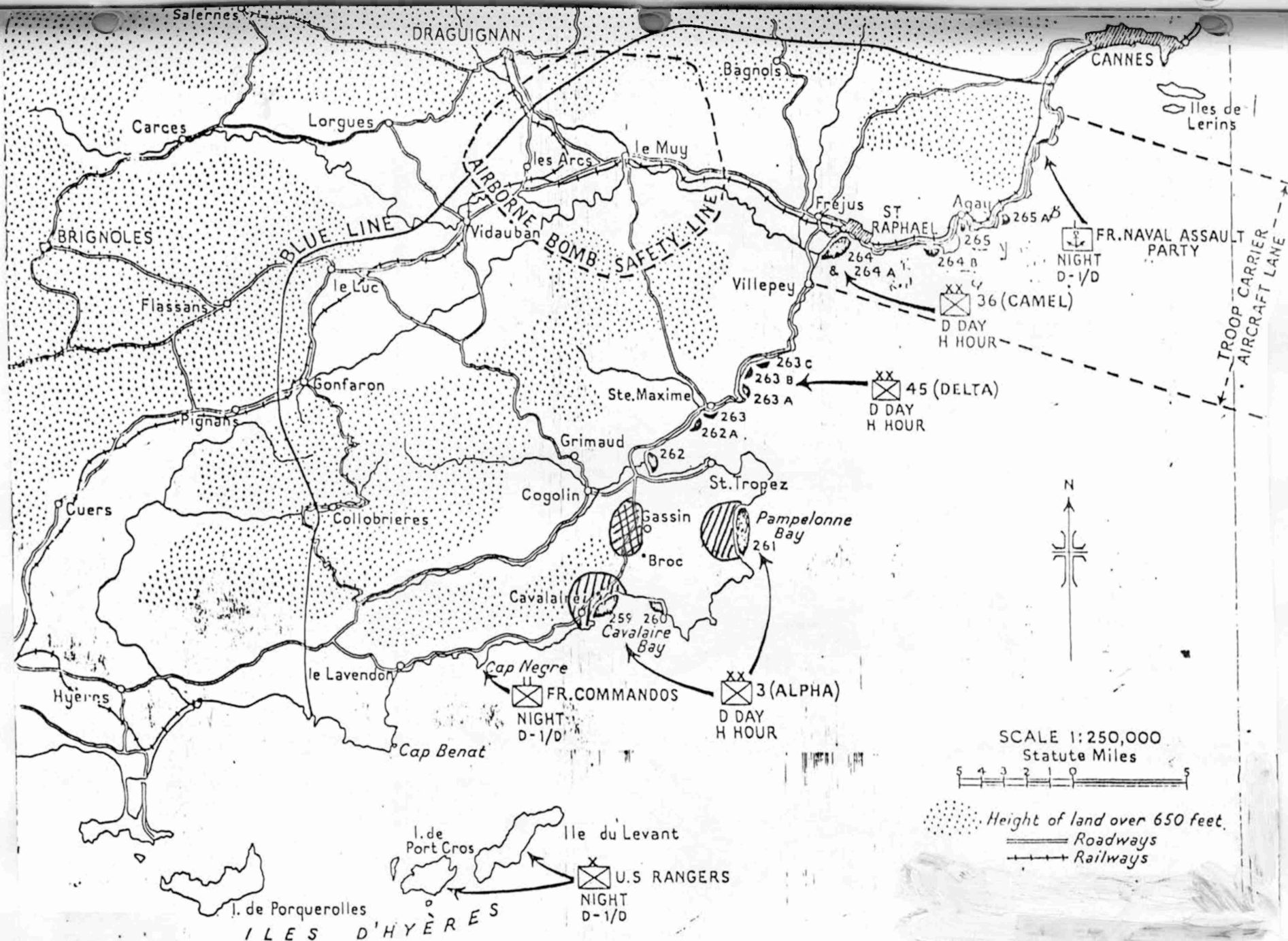
## FROM BEACHES TO BLUE LINE





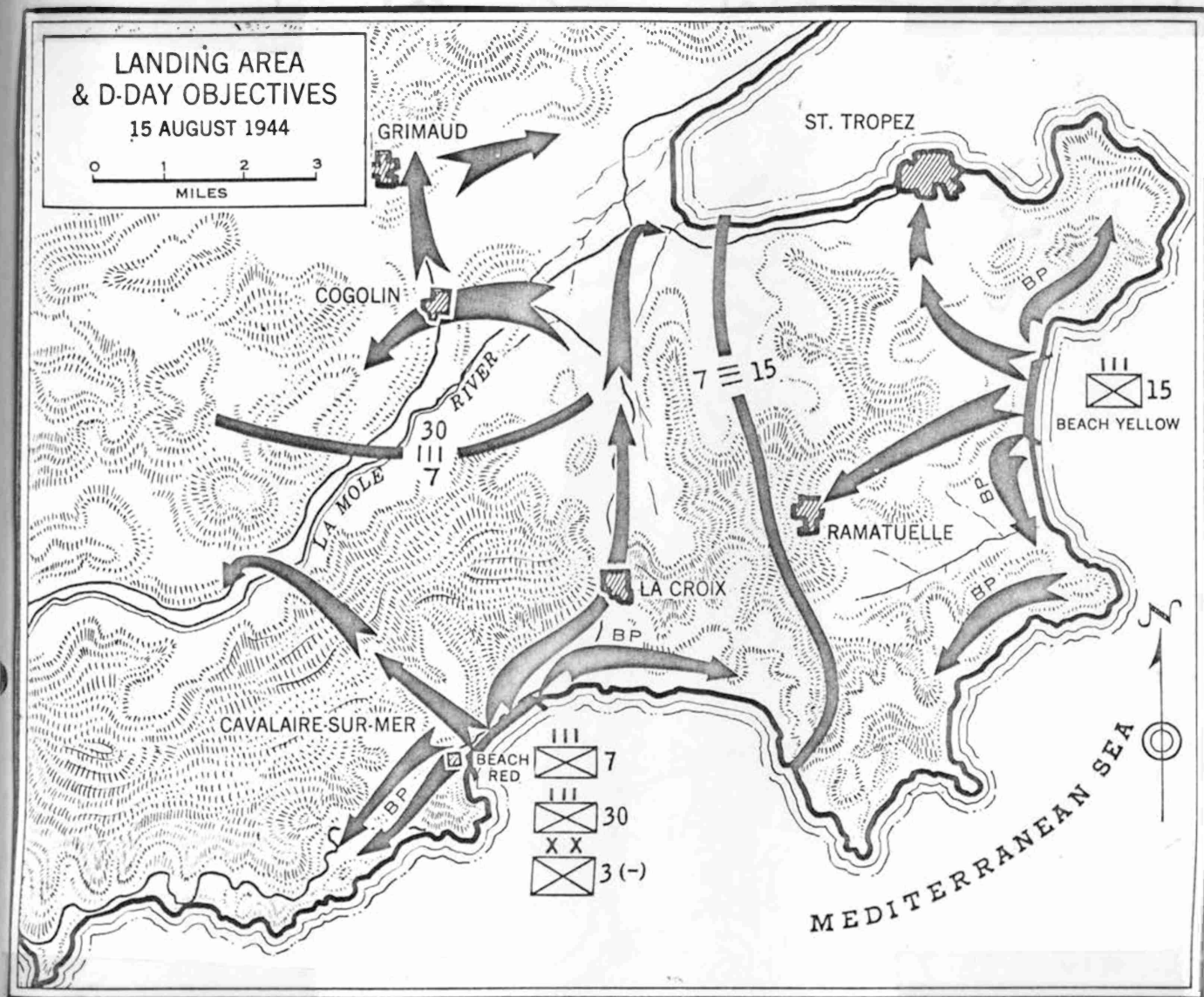


MAP B: Major Terrain Features



MAP C: THE INVASION PLAN





MAP D: 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION ASSAULT PLAN

UNCLASSIFIED

MANEUVERS  
BLUE LINE



MAP F: ADVANCES BEYOND THE BEACH HEAD LINE

